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SIR EDWARD COOK

K.B.E.

A BIOGRAPHY

BY SIR EDWARD COOK  
DELANE OF THE TIMES

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SIR EDWARD COOK, K.B.E.

# SIR · EDWARD · COOK

K.B.E.

A BIOGRAPHY BY

J. SAXON MILLS

M.A. ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE  
BARRISTER-AT-LAW INNER TEMPLE

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

142

*First published 1921.*

66227A

## PREFACE

I HAVE to acknowledge with gratitude much efficient help afforded to me in writing this book by Sir Edward Cook's family, especially Mr. A. M. Cook, whose wisdom and literary ability recall his brother's most striking characteristics and who has spared no pains in marshalling the vast material available for the biography. For the list of books and magazine articles I am indebted to the kindness of Sir Edward Cook's sisters, Mrs. Leach and Mrs. Vincent.





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## CHAPTER I

### PARENTAGE AND SCHOOL

Human Portraits, faithfully drawn, are of all pictures the welcomest on human walls.—CARLYLE.

THE subject of this Memoir enriched our English literature with four biographies of supreme excellence. He also published in one of his volumes of essays an elaborate paper on the art of biography. One approaches, therefore, with some trepidation the task of writing the life-story of the author and expert himself. Sir Edward Cook's biographical imperatives were somewhat austere. Among the rest he quotes Lord Morley's requirement that the biographer must write "without grudge or partiality". It is easy enough to write of E. T. Cook without grudge. It is more difficult for one who was closely associated with Cook in work and interest to write without partiality. One's reminiscences are of such unqualified respect and admiration that the biographer is in danger of falling into panegyric.

Some of Sir Edward's rules are not quite applicable to his own biography. It is true the biographer's main purpose and duty is to tell the life-history and to portray the character of his subject. Everything must contribute in general to these ends. But it is rather too rigid to insist that every page must be strictly and directly relevant thereto, that the author, for example, may quote letters written by, but not to,

his subject. An editor in succession of the *Pall Mall* and *Westminster Gazettes*, and the *Daily News* was brought into correspondence with most of his leading contemporaries in art, politics and literature, and Cook preserved all his letters with the utmost order and care. From the autograph-hunter's point of view alone the material bequeathed by Cook to his eventual biographer forms an incomparable treasury. From Gladstone to Tichborne, from poets to policemen, from rogues to royalties, from archbishops to actors, almost every person of any sort of distinction is represented by a letter or signature, some, of course, by a very large correspondence. Among these latter are Lord Rosebery, Lord Milner, W. T. Stead, Lord Morley, Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, Sir Henniker Heaton—the last a great purveyor of gossip; and among the less voluminous, but still frequent letter-writers are persons so diverse as Michael Davitt, Admiral Maxse, William Watson and Marie Corelli. Many very illustrious persons wrote to Cook with extreme but well-justified confidence. Though a journalist, Cook was the soul of discretion, and his judgment was so sound and well-balanced that its counsels were sought by a wide and varied circle of acquaintance. It is impossible to apply the rules of biographical composition so superstitiously as wholly to include these interesting letters, though they may be concerned more with the addressor than with the addressee.

In his essay on Biography, Cook remarks that the opening chapter on birth and parentage is apt to be as dull as the introduction to a Scott romance. Incidentally this implies that Sir Edward was never brought under the authentic spell of the Great Magician. But we will comply with this particular instruction, and without any attempt to climb genealogical trees,

simply recount that Edward Tyas Cook was born on May 12, 1857, the fifth and last son of Silas Kembell Cook, who had also two daughters. His birthplace was Brighton (23 Montpelier Crescent), a fact to which he alluded in an address to the Institute of Journalists in that popular resort in January 1913. "If I may be egotistical for a moment", he said, "I should like to say that to me Brighton is a great deal more than London-by-the-sea. I was born in the town; and the fact that I have survived thirty years of daily journalism, without, so far as I know—touch wood!—any serious injury to my health, is to be attributed, I doubt not, to the fact that my early years were spent under the care of that prince of physicians—Doctor Brighton".

Edward's father was secretary of the Seamen's Hospital, then in the old Dreadnought ship moored off Greenwich. He went up from Brighton to his office in London daily, surely a rather unusual feat in those days. At Brighton he helped his wife in the conduct of a preparatory school, attended by an average number of fifty boys, many of whom won distinction in after life. Among these may be reckoned the Earl of Chesterfield, the Provost of Oriel (L. R. Phelps), A. A. Tilley, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and Professor Foakes Jackson. Later, when the Hospital was moved into what had been the Infirmary of Greenwich Hospital, and the secretary became also house-governor, the family moved to Greenwich.

Most fathers of a family desire that the bond of kinship should remain strong and effectual among their children when they themselves have gone ahead. It is partly with this object that boys are sent to the same school, so that they may share in the same memories and traditions. But Cook's father held an original, and perhaps a more experienced, view on

this subject. He thought his boys were much more likely to remain friends if they were not thrown too much together. His sons were therefore not placed in the same public school, though A. K. and E. T. both went to Winchester College, of which the former became the historian and the latter a Fellow. Mr. S. K. Cook's method of ensuring a continuance of fraternal affection may not have many imitators, but its success with his own sons cannot be questioned. They remained the best of friends to each other, and most of them won an honourable distinction in different spheres. Sir Charles Cook is well known on the Charity Commission, while A. K. and A. M. are men of high academic and literary attainment. Many school-generations of St. Paul's boys have reason to remember A. M. Cook, surmaster of the school and the author of excellent classical text-books, with abiding affection and gratitude.

Cook had an unblemished record and won high distinction at Winchester, and he maintained throughout his entire life a singularly devoted attachment to the school. He entered as a Commoner in Short Half, 1869, but was elected a scholar in 1870. The Headmaster of Winchester at this time was George Ridding, afterwards the first Bishop of Southwell (died 1904). As might be expected from his future achievement, Cook took a keen interest in the intellectual and political life of the school, apart from the formal routine of class and examination. He quickly found his feet in the School Debating Society.

"I remember him very well", writes Sir L. A. Selby-Bigge of the Board of Education, "as the leading figure in the Debating Society at Winchester, of which he made me secretary when I was quite a junior. He was the only boy I ever remember who thought of setting up facts and marshalling them in argument.

Usually the school debates were an interchange of generalities. He even read Blue-books at that early age, and I remember his moving that the society should purchase a large parliamentary return relating, I think, to land tenure. After it was bought I do not think anybody ever looked at it, not even himself. But his action was a precocious anticipation of his subsequent methods of quarrying for facts. . . .

His advocacy of the Tichborne claimant had many amusing features. I sat by his side in school when he was pelted with coal because, having greatly distinguished himself in College Fifteen, he refused to play in College Six, and gave up football that he might have more time for reading Ruskin. He insisted on my reading *Fors Clavigera*, a pursuit which was thoroughly uncongenial to me. I found it also difficult at that age to share his passionate admiration for William Blake".

In this regard for fact and detail, and reliance upon them in argument, the child was quite remarkably the father of the man. It is interesting to observe the subjects which the boys discussed and the early trend of Cook's political views. He appears for the first time in 1872, when he seconded a motion for the abolition of the House of Lords. "The speech of Cook, a new member", says the school paper, "was especially noticeable". Next year, at the mature age of sixteen, he proposes "that the necessity for the improvement of the lower classes, politically, socially and materially, craves immediate and decisive legislation". This might have been accepted as in some degree a self-evident proposition. But it seems to have been debated by these budding senators with much heat. "The proposer", runs the report, "first said that there could be no improvement without a national secular education. He then proceeded to let off a few quiet squibs in the most harmless way against the Queen, whom he termed an 'official puppet', the House of Lords which, he said, represented all the selfishness and prejudice of the

aristocracy, and the House of Commons, as representing class interests only. He urged lastly the abolition of the game laws and alluded to such little trifles as Universal Suffrage and Redistribution of Land". In spite of this and other even more subversive speeches, and "in spite of the proposer entering into an altercation with the President, fortunately stopped by the Chapel bells", the motion, unlike other motions of so revolutionary a kind, was carried.

Other debates follow on the stock subjects of school debating societies, such as Ghosts, Charles I., Thackeray and Dickens, and in nearly all of them Cook takes part. One debate, however, is conspicuous. The secretary, E. T. Cook, proposes that the conduct of the Government in the Tichborne trial is worthy of the severest condemnation. The secretary was an ardent, though perhaps not wholly serious, believer in the claimant, with whom he was privileged to have personal interviews and from whom he received a number of letters, still preserved, in acknowledgment of moral and financial sympathy. On one occasion he organized a kind of Flag Day in the College with a procession in the claimant's interest, and in this debate he almost succeeded, by a speech which the President described as "a very lucid exposition of a difficult subject", in carrying the day for the motion—17 against 18. In 1874 E. T. Cook somewhat failed in an intelligent anticipation of events before they occur by speaking and voting against a motion "that German influence in Europe has reached such a dangerous pitch as to require immediate suppression". At another debate, however, he speaks in favour of compulsory military service.

Cook's keen and continuous interest in the *Wykehamist*, the College magazine, is equally a fore-



shadowing of his future life's work. He once told a company of fellow-journalists he was addressing that his catastrophic career as a journalist had begun very early in his connection with his school paper. He rose to be editor of the magazine, but had to resign on grounds not now ascertainable, but ostensibly for the reason given by the higher powers, that it interfered with his work. The real reason was probably some unimportant indiscretion in criticizing the established authorities. But, whether official editor or not, he continued while at school to inspire and contribute to the *Wykehamist*. Some new features, we find, are introduced: for example, a column headed "Our Contemporaries", which, however, had to be discontinued. But the burning question which occupies most space in correspondence and editorial comment is that of "fagging" and the possibility of "bullying" involved in that system. The problem as stated in *Wykehamist* parlance was this: "Are College Inferiors in Sixth Book to continue to be subject to Cricket Fagging"? A future editor of the *Times* wrote, "Yes, College Prefects cannot do without them, and the practice is a good antidote to conceit". The future editor of the *Daily News* fights tooth and nail against an opponent who *buckles* on all his logical armour in defence of a flagrant injustice. Whether vested interests prevailed or the grievance was in any degree redressed is not apparent. In any case the victims were not very numerous.

But Cook's attitude on this subject remained always characteristic. Bullying may or may not be inseparable from school fagging, but bullying in any degree or form he relentlessly attacked through his whole journalistic career. He was always on the side of the weak and the defenceless. When editor of the *Daily News*

he made a very prominent feature of what he called "The Cry of the Children".

Cook incurred some loss of prestige in the public opinion of the school by his lack of interest in games. He was not by nature an athlete. He played a little football but gave it up partly perhaps, as suggested by Sir Selby Bigge, that he might have more time to study his beloved Ruskin, but also for the more sufficient reason that he suffered at school from a back weakness which required him to sit every day for a certain time in a specially constructed chair. He showed no sign of this weakness in after life, but it certainly affected his school activities.

The domination of athletics in our public school system has been a little overdone. It is unreasonable to attempt to standardize a large number of boys of widely differing tastes and temperaments, and to insist that they shall be equally interested in certain games of ball. The question came up in the *Wykehamist* in the course of a correspondence upon subscriptions to athletics. Though not an athlete himself, Cook could understand their importance in school life, and the following extract from the *Wykehamist*, characteristic in tone and literary expression, shows his fair-minded and tolerant opinion on the subject :

We deprecate very strongly the view which two of our former controversialists seem to hold that this is a question between athletes and non-athletes. It is not what we are or like ourselves that we are most bound to consider. It is what we wish the community to be. Shall we not do well to view all school matters as independently of our own powers or fancies as is possible ? Exactly in proportion as we can do this, as we can take pleasure in the school Athletics though we be hopelessly asthmatic, in the school cricket though we do not know how to hold a bat, in the School's intellectual successes though we be

unable to do a verse or learn a proposition—exactly in that proportion are we worthy to call ourselves a Public School and not a fortuitous concourse of jostling atoms.

Though Cook must have been in all essentials a highly praiseworthy boy, the reports sent to his parents were of no unmingled eulogy. A rather severely critical letter bears a date in December 1873. Only in history is the record satisfactory. "In Divinity", writes the Headmaster, "his examination has been the worst but two". His scholarship, his "unseens" and verses were "far from up to his place". "He puzzles me in many ways", concludes Dr. Ridding, "by an apparent combination of solidity and intelligent interest and thoughtfulness with strange blundering and obliquity of apprehension, and his work seems in this to reflect the state of his general ideas and character". In this picture the "solidity" and "intelligence" are recognizable enough, but it is not so clear how the "blundering" and "obliquity" manifested themselves. We may judge from the Tichborne infatuation and from his subsequent escapade in the divinity examination at Oxford that Cook sowed in his early years some intellectual wild-oats, but they were not a very productive or long-lived crop. Such parental discouragement as was caused by this letter must have been quickly dissipated by Cook's growing distinction and by following reports. One of the latter addressed to Mrs. Cook after the death of her husband, and dated August 3, 1874, has been preserved :

Your boy has done himself great credit. His English work is unusually promising, and I hope his classical work is gaining the accuracy that has been its want. His conduct and character are all that I could wish. I should be glad if he took more part in the boyish life of school games, etc., and so was more at one with the other boys, but it is for his sake I regret it mainly, though I feel it will prevent his being so effective a school leader

as his brother. He takes, however, so active a part in the intellectual interests of the school that it would be absurd for me to attach too much regret to his less active part in the physical.

The testimony of Dr. Ridding, not an easily satisfied critic, to Cook's moral record at Winchester is conclusive, and his intellectual achievement was no less satisfactory. In September 1874 he became Senior Prefect and Head of the School. He was Prefect of Library, 1874-5, and Prefect of Hall, 1875-6. The prizes he won included those of the Queen's Medals—the Gold Medals of 1874 and 1875 for English Essay ("The Influence of Language on History") and English Verse ("David Livingstone, b. 1816, d. 1873"), and the Silver Medal of 1876 for English Speech (Burke on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts). Other prizes were: 1874, the Hawkins Prize for English Literature; 1874-5, the Duncan Prize for English Historical Essay ("The Condition and Importance of the City of Winchester during the period 1000-1300"), and, 1875, the Warden and Fellows' Prize for English Essay ("The Public Duties of a Citizen"). These successes, it will be noticed, are preparatory in fact and prophetic in promise of Cook's future activities. He left Winchester on July 26, 1876, senior on the election roll for New College, Oxford. In a valedictory article in the *Wykehamist* he writes: "When he (the boy leaving school) has reached his journey's end and finds himself no more at school at Winchester, he will begin to know how dear were his school friendships and the details of his school life, and how sacred the traditions and associations in which he lived and mixed as a school-boy. But leaving school is a parting, not a separation, and Wykehamists, at least, are not inclined to sever too quickly or too readily their connection with the school".

This was to be exceptionally true of Cook, and here we may briefly continue the history of his lifelong

association with Winchester, as recorded in the minute-book of the Warden and Fellows. In February 1903, upon the death of Dr. Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, Cook was elected a Fellow of Winchester by the Headmaster (Dr. Burge), the Second Master (Mr. Rendall), and the other members of the teaching staff. He served as sub-warden of the College during 1911 and 1912. In 1908, when the Warden's Gallery was converted into the Fellows' Library—a change which he did much to promote—Cook was appointed Librarian, a position which he held, by annual reappointment, until his death. He was a Member of the Estates and Finance Committee, 1905–18, and Auditor of the Education Funds Accounts, 1904–10, and again 1913–16. As Auditor he drew up in 1914 a very elaborate Report, to which he added a Supplement in March 1917, on “College Contributions to the Education Fund and otherwise to common School Services”.

Cook took a full share of work on the special committees of the College. He devoted much time and care to the publication of the College Register. It was the subject of his earliest report to the Warden and Fellows (January 1904), and also of his latest, completed when his short fatal illness was already upon him. “His devotion to his duties as a Fellow”, say the Warden and Fellows in the resolution they passed on Cook's death, “is illustrated by the fact that after 1903 he was never absent from a College Meeting. Out of eighty-six meetings held while he was a Fellow, he was present at eighty-five”. Cook's diary contains the corresponding evidence of this lifelong devotion to the welfare of his old school. It was only during his week's last illness that he wrote through his sister a letter resigning his position at the College. Winchester has never known a more loyal and devoted son.

## CHAPTER II

### OXFORD DAYS

Ut adolescentem in quo senile aliquid, sic senem in quo aliquid adolescentis probo ("I like a youth with a touch of the old man in him, and an old man with a touch of the youth").—CICERO, *De sen.* xi.

WE have seen the beginnings at Winchester of Cook's interest in politics alongside his formal school work. At Oxford he was now to cultivate on a higher plane these two abilities for scholarship and public affairs, the combination of which is said to produce a very ideal type of character. When Cook went up Oxford had recently sent out at least three men thus doubly and fortunately endowed—John Morley, H. H. Asquith and Alfred Milner. Another striking example in our times of this dual capacity for thought and action, for literature and politics, was seen in one of the wisest and most successful of British administrators, Lord Cromer. It is not necessary to follow Cook along the worn highroad of academic study and examination. His interest in contemporary public affairs was so absorbing that he might easily have allowed it to interfere with his primary duties at the University. He had the self-command to resist any such temptation, but it was inevitable that his purely academic prospects should suffer to some extent by this division of interest, and the sacrifice was probably manifest in the subsequent failure of his attempts to obtain a College Fellowship. A little

more success in some conventional subject on these occasions might have relegated Cook permanently to academic shades and deprived our public policy of that wise counsel and direction which he brought to bear upon it for thirty years.

Cook's high academic success at Oxford is the more praiseworthy because he threw himself with whole-hearted interest into the life of the Union and into the politics of University and city, as well as of the nation and the Empire. The Union Societies of Oxford and Cambridge are the finest training-schools in the world for parliamentary statesmanship. In these societies have been trained now for nearly a hundred years a large proportion of the men who have won the highest distinctions in our public and administrative life. A glance at the list of the Presidents of the Oxford Union alone from 1830 to 1880, reveals, among many other well-known names, those of Gladstone, Dufferin, Goschen, Lushington, Dicey, Bryce, Asquith, Milner and Curzon, and, as in duty bound, I must claim at least as important a contribution of leaders from the sister society at Cambridge.

Cook found a highly congenial field for his talents and aspirations in the Oxford Union and in the Palmerston Club, of both of which institutions he became the President. His brother, A. K., had held office as Librarian in 1873-4, and he himself became President in the Michaelmas Term of 1879. To be elected President of the Union is an honour as distinctive in its kind as to become Lord Mayor of London or Prime Minister in the Imperial Parliament. It means that a youth has made his impress and won his spurs in one of the most critical and formidable debating arenas in the world. He is not simply responsible as Speaker for the order of an assembly, liable like the Mother of all Parliaments to

gusts of passion and misrule: he can also "catch his own eye" and descend at his own chosen moment into the conflict. At Oxford, as in after life, Cook was a graceful, humorous and powerfully convincing speaker. Competent critics have pronounced him the best debater of his time at the Union, which, considering the rival claimants to that distinction, is very high praise. He was perhaps not equally adapted to the conditions of platform and hustings, but he always satisfied the careful classical definition of an orator as "*vir bonus dicendi peritus*". The papers he left include copies of a good many of the speeches he delivered. He seems to have written them almost *verbatim*, sometimes leaving passages to be filled up *ex tempore*, which implied a good memory for details, and sometimes, but not always, relying upon notes as an aid to delivery.

A few of Cook's contemporaries have been kind enough to set down their reminiscences of the Union debates at this time. The Right Hon. Lord Sumner, then Mr. J. A. Hamilton of Balliol, who was Cook's junior by two years, was himself President of the Union in the Hilary term of 1882 and has since risen to the highest spheres of the judicial hierarchy, writes:

Those who remember the debates at the Oxford Union in 1879 and 1880 will associate with them the names of E. T. Cook of New College, G. N. Curzon of Balliol,<sup>1</sup> and B. R. Wise<sup>2</sup> of Queen's, a remarkable trio of speakers. Of these Cook was certainly not the least either in merit or in influence. In many ways he is best described by contrasting him with the other two.

Cook was especially a debater. The bent of his mind and the form of his diction gave this character to his speeches. He had the faculty, unusual at his then age, of following an argument as he heard it, of finding the answer as it proceeded, and of clothing

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards K.C. and Attorney-General and Agent-General for New South Wales.



his answer in telling and appropriate language when his turn came to reply. He was terse, incisive and logical; austere, if not severe, in manner; lacking in warmth, but effective by emphasis. His appearance lent itself to support this impression, for his prominent features and large forehead suggested a maturity of thought, in which in fact he had an advantage over his contemporaries. He had none of the studied and ornate oratory of Curzon; probably he did not seek it. He was far from the enthusiastic and rather boyish eloquence of Wise. Well equipped with facts and familiar with the principles of the Gladstonian Liberalism, which he had embraced, he was always ready to give battle and always a formidable antagonist. He had the prudence not to speak too often.

In politics I think that he was a temperate, if not strictly a moderate Liberal. I chiefly remember him as speaking on Foreign Policy; not that he avoided domestic questions, but Foreign Policy was then much discussed, and I do not think that he was then prepared to advocate any of the far-reaching schemes of social and constitutional change that have since occupied so much attention. I believe that he took part as a speaker in the election in 1880, when Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Joseph Chitty became (for a time) members for Oxford. Wise certainly did. He was also a regular attendant at the meetings of the Palmerston Club, but there, perhaps for want of opposition, he was less conspicuous than on the large field of the Union debates.

I cannot recall any one speech of his that stood out above any other. There was a speech of A. A. Baumann's,<sup>1</sup> whom I never heard, that in my day was quoted as the most successful speech made at the Union for a long time, and is still, I believe, recalled by contemporaries. I do not think any speech of Cook's was regarded in this way: but the same may be said of the speeches of Curzon and Wise. I remember a quotation, which must have impressed him strongly, for I heard him use it twice. He said that a Dutch paper, speaking, I suppose, of the acquisition of Cyprus, had said that in the event of aggression in the East England "would make an indignant protest, write some eloquent despatches, and walk off with the Dutch island of Java". The sardonic tone of this sentence, which he delivered with much

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards M.P. for Camberwell (Peckham).

effect, was fairly characteristic of his style. It was in its way very finished and complete; and though I never heard him speak after he left Oxford, I should not have expected that in later years there would be any marked difference either in method or manner from the style which he had developed as an undergraduate.

Lord Sumner alludes in this vivid portraiture to the Palmerston Club, a debating society for Liberal undergraduates of which Cook was also President. Cook mentions it as "rather languishing" and "badly in need of a banquet". Otherwise we hear very little of the proceedings at the Palmerston, though it was at one of its dinners that Cook first met Lord Rosebery and began a friendship which lasted throughout his life. Another society which Cook and Rennell Rodd helped to found devoted itself to discussions on art and became known as the "Passionate Pilgrims". Then there was the Essay Society at Cook's own college, and a Shakespeare Society at Balliol. Wit sharpened wit with a vengeance in those days at Oxford.

It is noteworthy how Cook's contemporaries agree in dwelling on the unemotional character of his oratory. There was in his intellectual composition a good deal of that "dry light", or "*siccum lumen*", which according to Heraclitus is "the purest soul", and this quality was fully reflected in his speaking. His complete reliance upon fact and logic and his exclusive appeal to the reason and intellect had much to do with his power and success as a debater. The Rev. E. M. Walker, Fellow and Senior Tutor of Queen's, himself an accomplished speaker, stresses this point:

I doubt if I was present at any debate when E. T. Cook was President, but a few speeches that I heard him make left a deep impression on my memory. What impressed me most was his relentless logic and his mordant sarcasm. He never attempted

the emotional. He and I would have agreed on hardly a single question of the hour—I was as much opposed to him in my view of the past as in my outlook on the present—and yet if I had had to vote immediately after he had spoken, I should have found it difficult to resist his pleading. To put it in another way, his speeches afforded me the utmost intellectual pleasure, although they offended all my prejudices and shocked all my sentiments. He stood there, simply rending an opponent limb from limb. His skill in debate was consummate. And debate is precisely that which few undergraduates understand. He must have prepared his speeches carefully, but he could adapt them on the spur of the moment to the turn of the debate. I can honestly say that he was one of the most effective speakers that I have ever listened to.

Sir Montague Shearman, Judge of the High Court, recalls that Cook, B. R. Wise and Sidney Low were the three outstanding men of the Palmerston Club in and about the years 1879 and 1880. At the Palmerston a paper on some political subject was read and then discussed, and in such discussions, which afforded more opportunity for dialectics than for oratory, Cook was in his element. Sir Montague continues :

I did not go very much to the Union, but used to be drawn thither to hear Cook and Wise, and G. N. Curzon on the other side. All these were wonderfully good. What amused me about both E. T. C. and Curzon was that though they were both boys they had the political information and ready speech of veteran statesmen, and both were fine speakers.

Another thing I recollect is what an extraordinary difference there was between B. R. Wise and E. T. Cook. Wise was full of youthful eloquence that was vague and misty. He spoke with the air of a devotee and at times was really impassioned. E. T. C. never deviated from logic and could always spot with unerring aim the weak point in the armour of the opponent. The pair of them and Curzon were a wonderful trio to be on the stage at the same time.

Mr. J. Wells, Warden of Wadham, writes :

I have always thought that the period of the late seventies at the Union was the most brilliant in my time, with the exception perhaps of that of the early nineties, when the present Lord Chancellor fought his early battles against Sir John Simon and Hilaire Belloc. In the first of these periods, which was the time of my own undergraduate membership, we had as Presidents Lord Milner in 1876, A. A. Baumann, Mr. Justice Barton and the Rev. R. F. Horton in 1877, Professor Poulton and Sir Edward Cook in 1879, Bernhard Wise and Lord Curzon in 1880; . . . of the other eight Presidents of the period four obtained seats in Parliament.

Among these Presidents two stand out clearly in my mind as the speakers who most appealed to me, Lord Milner and Sir Edward Cook: their speeches seem to me to have been on the same lines; they had not the fiery eloquence with which Horton or Wise at times swept the House away, nor had they the polished periods which even then marked Curzon as an orator of the grand old style. But for close reasoned argument, apt illustration, command of the subject and well-turned sentences no one excelled them. So far as I remember, neither of them ever made a bad speech; and Cook, at all events, I heard speak frequently. His manner was restrained even to coldness and his sarcasm was cutting: every word told.

Cook seems not to have spoken in his Freshman's year, but early in 1878 he sprang into fame at once. On February 7 in a maiden speech he supported B. F. Costelloe (afterwards M.P.) in condemning Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy, and only a fortnight later he was chosen—an unusual honour for so new a speaker—to oppose the motion of R. Dawson (afterwards M.P. for Leeds) attacking Mr. Gladstone. His first independent motion was non-political, advocating State support for the Stage: it was carried without a division; a year later as an ex-President he spoke for another motion, modified in form, in support of the Stage. As a rule, however, his speeches were political and hence it is the greater tribute to his merit that at a time when the Union had a strong Conservative majority he was chosen President the first time he stood, although he had not held any of the lower offices by service in which approach was usually made to the Presidential Chair.

The Dean of Carlisle (the Very Rev. H. Rashdall) recalls those days in a letter to Mr. A. M. Cook :

My personal acquaintance with your brother at New College was very slight, but I have the most vivid recollections of his speeches at the Essay Society and at the Union ; curiously I have no distinct impression of the Palmerston excepting impressions of his speeches in general. I remember the first speech at the Union. He got a prominent place in an important debate—no doubt by prearrangement. The speech produced a tremendous impression and put him at once in the front rank. I do not think he spoke often : his speeches were highly prepared and elaborate efforts. When I got into the Essay Society I was just through Mods and disposed to look upon the distinguished “ Great Men ” with much awe. I always looked back upon the debates in which your brother did battle with Horton and Sargant as the heroic period of the Essay Society. Your brother figured as a sort of mean term between Horton who represented N.C. orthodoxy and Sargant who was purely destructive. I need not say that he was much more than the equal of Horton in such debates (except in point of readiness and persiflage), and quite the equal of Sargant. I cannot remember anything very much more definite. I don’t think I should describe him as acrimonious—“ severe and coldly intellectual ” might perhaps be nearer the mark.

Mr. Geoffrey Drage of Christchurch writes :

I did not often have the privilege of hearing your brother speak at the Union as I rarely attended its meetings, but of course he shared with George Curzon and Bernhard Wise the honour of being in the first flight. He had neither the flowing periods of the former nor the poetical imagination of the latter. He excelled them both, however, in his talent for close reasoning, and his extraordinary capacity for carrying conviction to his hearers’ minds. These qualities rendered him *facile princeps* as a speaker at college debating societies and smaller gatherings where the arguments are more closely followed and where less appeal is made to passion or imagination. On the other hand, the fact that he could be very successful at political meetings is shown by his selection as a possible candidate for Oxford in succession to so great a personage as Sir William Harcourt, then

at the zenith of his power. I never heard him speak on these occasions, but I quite well recollect his speeches being discussed and always in flattering terms.

Cook was by instinct, but not heredity, a Liberal. During his leadership of that party in the Union, the Conservative protagonist, no mean opposite in brilliance and ability, was the Hon. G. N. Curzon of Balliol. Cook wrote to his dear friend, H. F. Fox, afterwards a Don at Brasenose, a vivid account of the first debate which he surveyed and controlled from his Olympian seat. The reader must, of course, make some allowance for the "animus politicus." Mr. Curzon moved (October 16, 1879) "That the return of the Conservatives to power at the next General Election is desirable in the interests of the nation". Cook writes :

Curzon's speech at the Union on the first night was fifty minutes altogether, and the Bloody One<sup>1</sup> who answered him produced an analysis of how many minutes had been devoted to each subject. Twenty were devoted to a general introduction, in the course of which were discussed, amongst a host of others, the following subjects : the new arrangement of seats in the New Debating Hall, the parallel with the House of Commons thereby suggested, the greatness of that Assembly and the reflected greatness of the Union. Then came ten minutes of more particular introduction, which were given to an elaborate compilation of synonyms for expressing "I am a Conservative". As much as seven minutes were devoted to the real subject. [Mr. E. T. Cook, who spoke later in the debate, thought that the Hon. Opposer had little reason for accusing the Hon. Mover of undue compression. That was surely a charge which no one who had ever listened to the Hon. Mover could possibly bring against him. Mr. Cook was rather struck with admiration at the Hon. Mover's fecundity of expression which enabled him to make a defence of the Conservative party last as long as seven minutes].

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<sup>1</sup> This is the inelegant but regular appellation of B. R. Wise. The nickname was perhaps due to Wise's "grand ways", and the fact that he was an Athletic Blue. Cook and Wise married sisters.

The House listened to him with wonderful patience, partly, I expect, from a sort of idea that, as it was the first debate in the New Hall, something must be coming. However, they were naturally enough tired out at the end of him, and the result was that the House emptied a good deal when the Bloody One began. He cut up Curzon very well—very deliberate and pointed scores—some of them perhaps too elaborate and not light enough. Then came the solid part of the speech which he had prepared beforehand and which fell rather flat. I had told him before that I thought it would be too heavy—long extracts from John Morley, antithetical definitions of Liberalism and Conservatism, and so forth. There was no oratorical form about it—that was the fault. His peroration, though, was very good, the best thing I have heard him say. I felt something like listening to Gladstone, as he told us what blessings the Liberal Party had yet in store with their programme of Peace, Retrenchment and Equality.

The rest of the debate was very dull. I tried to enliven it later by cutting into Curzon. I felt very virtuous as the House was quite empty and there could be no reason for speaking except conviction. Also it was the first time I had tried speaking at the Union entirely extempore, and I got on much better than I expected. Amongst other things I quoted from memory something that Mr. Cross said the other day about the Zulu War not having been necessary. Curzon thought fit to deny the accuracy of my quotation, and I promised to furnish him with the extract. All the next week we carried on an extra-parliamentary debate, and the letters are great fun.

Matthew Arnold was up in the gallery all the time—lolling back and looking much amused at the roaring of the young barbarians. I had asked Sir W. Harcourt. He wrote back as follows: "I am obliged to leave Oxford this afternoon; otherwise it would have given me great pleasure to have been present at your debate—as a hearer, not as a speaker. I owe much in my public life to the Union at Cambridge, and am very glad to think that your institution is in full vigour and discussing the same old questions as we used to discuss thirty years ago. I should particularly have wished to hear Curzon's opening, as I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance at Eton. There is nothing more interesting to an old stager like myself than to see the two-year-olds run".

Some of the subjects discussed in the Union during Cook's presidency look rather quaint to-day. It was moved on November 13 "That, in the opinion of this House, the apology of Her Majesty's Ministers with regard to the Afghan and Zulu Wars is inconsistent alike with fact and constitutional principle". Another evening was devoted to Sir Wilfrid Lawson's Permissive Bill. But it is interesting to find the young barbarians at play with a problem which remains still as intractable as forty years ago. On November 27 it was moved "That the grant of complete legislation and executive independence to Ireland alone affords reparation for the past and hope for the future", the resolution, even so early as 1879, being lost by an adverse majority of only one vote. It is remarkable that neither the President nor the Conservative leader took any part in this debate on a question which in a few years was to "burn" with a vengeance. Among Cook's rather older contemporaries at the Union were Viscount Lymington (afterwards the Earl of Portsmouth), R. F. Horton, H. W. Paul, afterwards with Cook on the *Daily News*, A. A. Baumann, who was an exceptionally able speaker, and the Hon. W. St. John Brodrick, afterwards Viscount Midleton, Secretary of State for War and India. All these held the Presidency.

Cook was President of the Union during the Michaelmas term of 1879. The next term but one his future brother-in-law, B. R. Wise, occupied the chair. Though many Presidents have held high, some the highest, place in the State in after life, it is surprising how many pass the chair without fulfilling the promise which that distinction almost always implies. The writer remembers in his own time at Cambridge several brilliant speakers who became President and seemed destined to a great name in English politics, and yet were scarcely



heard of again after leaving the University. They dropped into some unfathomable "oubliette" of the Civil Service or, maybe, accepted some scholastic appointment in the overseas Empire—useful and honourable vocations but not so dazzling as those to which our admiring eyes and ears had predestined them. The old Universities unquestionably turn out from their schools and debating societies many men who, as has been said, have "a great future behind them", men who seem to exhaust their aspirations and their reserves of vitality in the great competitions of University life. Cook had something to say on this subject in a letter written during the long vacation of 1879 to his friend Fox, whose University life was sorely interrupted by perpetual ill-health :

I gather from the tone of your letter that you were in a fit of depression when you wrote it. But I am sure if you are having a day like this at Mürren, the mountains and the flowers and the trees will banish it. Your melancholy must have been associated with confusion of ideas, for you speak as if loss of University distinction left you aimless in life. It would be much more true to facts to put it the other way and say that the attainment of University distinction leaves the victim aimless. If a good degree is to be one's great goal, what comes of the after years ? Is one then to begin looking back and be content to think how distinguished we were when we were young men in College. University distinction be blowed !—more especially if it is going to interfere with you and make you less full of noble thoughts and bright affections than you are and have been. We are at Oxford to be educated and not to be examined. You are fortunate enough to be obliged to remember this. I am bold or reckless enough to teach it to myself.

We get a vivid picture in these letters to Fox of Cook's life at Oxford in the late seventies and early eighties of the last century. It was a time of strenuous and aspiring work, relieved by much social amusement

and an occasional foray deep into the continent of Europe achieved at enviably small expense. For Cook and some of his circle suffered from a chronic lack of pence or "dibs". They helped one another financially, and, as appears from an amusingly naïve letter to Fox at Davos, they loyally repaid. "I am desolated", writes Cook, "at receiving your postcard, as I'm afraid my dilatoriness in sending dibs may keep you at Davos longer than you want". Then follows a long and careful exposition of the route and cost of the journey to London. "So I hope", continues Cook, "the £8 which I have managed to scrape together will see you through all right. In case, however, you have been counting on more from me, I send you a cheque for £5, which you can use as a *last resource*. I haven't a 1d. in the bank, so it will be overdrawing, which is all right in the end, only not to be resorted to except in extreme necessity. If you don't want it mind you destroy it". "I owe you fivepence", writes Cook elsewhere to his friend, "but I haven't so much in the world, but have patience and you shall get it". There is something delightful in this early-Christian communism among Cook's friends and their indifference to "dibs", save so far as these were unfortunately necessary to a moderate fruition of life.

It was financial pressure that constrained Cook to take a private pupil in the long vacation of 1879. At twenty pounds a month and all expenses he coached Cyril Drage, son of Dr. Drage of Hatfield, a boy "as delightful as he was handsome", for the preliminary medical examination. Cook became greatly attached to his pupil, though the work interfered rather seriously with his own studies.

Cook's letters to his dear friend Fox are marked already by that refined wisdom and sound and steady

judgment which were his lifelong attributes. They are also full of a humour and a *joie de vivre* which redeem their more serious features from any suspicion of priggishness. There is a grave and gentle sincerity in the beginning of a long letter to his friend :

MY DEAR BOY—I am very sorry to hear of your collapse ; but as you have bravely done with moaning, I shall say no more about it. You know you have my sympathy, whatever that is worth—all that I have to give of it and that you can digest ; perhaps it will be light enough to go down with the milk and lime water. Indeed I don't know what more I could say, for it is as useless as it is easy to preach about patience and resignation. I quite agree with the doctors (what a spec. for them ! ) that you ought to reserve all your powers for getting well. “ *Pueri si valent, satis discunt* ”. Preaching is tempting, as well as easy and useless, and I take that as my text from the I-don't-know-which epigram of Martial. You are much too anxious about yourself and not nearly conceited enough : take a lesson from me. . . . Never try to write sad or introspective poetry. Happiness is just as beautiful as sadness. Poetry may perhaps be a *κάθαρσις*, but prevention is better than cure. The rest on this subject shall appear in a future volume of my *Proverbial Philosophy*, by a respectable old sage. The virtues can only be acquired when there is a field for their exercise—show yourself brave as you are all else that I seem to know you to be. [Here follows a long description of certain social frivolities at Oxford in which B. R. Wise was largely involved.] Good night, my dear old boy. “ See how long a letter ”, and take it as a measure of my sympathy and affection.—Ever your friend,

E. T. Cook.

Cook keeps his invalid friend well posted up in Oxford events. Another letter to Fox at Bristol may be given as an average example of this interesting correspondence, which in itself is evidence enough that Cook had the true “ genius for friendship ” :

NEW COLLEGE,  
April 24, 1879.

MY DEAR BOY—I am so very sorry to see from your letter to the Bloody One that you have not been so well again and that you have had another of those miserable shivering fits. No doubt it was one of those relapses which always come on in the course of getting better. If you were only well it would not be so bad loafing about “where now those nightingales are singing”, and reading snatches of Ruskin, and rejoicing your people by staying with them and amassing wealth by staying down, instead of compiling statistics about iron and cotton, and doing divinity papers, and going out to dismal luncheons and all the rest of it. “Look at this picture and at that”, and don’t “junk it over” me too much, that’s all. . . .

I lunched with the Bloody One to-day, to meet two Australians, one a parson, one a banker. I liked the parson best because he talked least. The Bloody One drew the banker most cleverly on the depression of trade for me, and that was all right. But after lunch the conversation took an aesthetic turn, and the banker was invited to admire the architectural beauties of the High. Well, he admitted that there were different styles; but for himself he saw nothing in Oxford to come up to a row of fine American hotels.

He went to Thorold Rogers on Wednesday, but he did not sport a single joke, indecent or profane. This was particularly annoying because I had induced Freddy Baines to come with me, promising him something racy; however, he professed himself satisfied and intends coming with me regularly. . . .

I have just met Germaine,<sup>1</sup> and he has put his terminal questions to me, such as “when are you going to send me your photograph?” and “when are you coming to see me?” I have been piling it on with my Essay lately and have quilled<sup>2</sup> the Bloody One no end by putting in references in footnotes thus: “For an able exposition of etc., etc., see *Facts and Fallacies of Modern Protection*, by B. R. Wise (Trübner and Co.)”. I have read nothing else but statistics and the newspaper since I last

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Germaine, of Brasenose, President of the Union, Easter Term, 1878, afterwards K.C., Recorder of Lichfield.

<sup>2</sup> Winchester slang for “gratified”.

saw you, and my stock of ideas greatly requires replenishing. But I must now get to statistics again.

Here I was interrupted by Curzon, who had sat himself by me and asked me to dinner. Go on getting well, and believe me, —Yours very affectionately,

E. T. Cook.

This last letter shows Cook involved in politico-economical studies. Foreshadowings of all his future interests occur in his correspondence and the glimpses we get of him elsewhere. Dr. R. F. Horton, the distinguished Nonconformist preacher, gives us one of these latter in his *Autobiography* (p. 41). The occasion was one of the Saturday evening meetings of the New College Essay Society :

I think I see Webbe (the University bat) start up in pious horror, because Cook (now Sir Edward Cook) had compared Shelley, for his passionate love of love and eagerness for truth, to our Lord.

"The idea", cried Webbe, "of likening an adulterer and a suicide to Christ".

"A suicide!" retorted Cook, who had a curious acidulated heat in debate; "I know that Shelley was drowned by accident in the Bay of Genoa, but this is the first time I ever heard of his committing suicide".

Then Webbe, hot and fuming: "I have no doubt that he entered the boat with the intention of committing suicide". The session ended in convulsive laughter.

This is one of the few and the latest occasions on which Cook is reported as "airing" the independence of his religious views. In these early days he seems to have been interested in religious controversy, for he tells Fox, November 16, 1879 :

I arranged a great theological gathering last night, at dinner and at the Essay Society afterwards, to hear Margoliouth read on Pío Nono. The company included Mr. Shipley (Free Thinker),

Mr. Mellie Graham (Anglican, and thought to be a likely convert by) Mr. Vassall (Romanist), Mr. Grissell (ditto and Papal Chamberlain), Signor Tivoli (Italian democrat and anti-clerical), and Mr. E. T. Cook (Non-Ascript). The essay, which was ridiculously rancorous, proved too much for Grissell, who abruptly left the room after a few sentences, but only served to loose Mr. Vassall's tongue, and he really made an eloquent, moderate and sensible speech. Old Tivoli was much delighted and also made a speech. I pleased Vassall much by my defence of Pio Nono, for his early life was really fine, I think.

Another letter three days later shows E. T. C.'s early interest in literary criticism, on a subject which has perhaps been over illustrated since those days :

Paton has lent me a French translation of Omar Khayyám, which I want to compare with FitzGerald's English one, for I read in some magazine article in the *Vac.* that the English version is practically an original poem. If it was really Omar, it would be very interesting (apart from its great beauty), for it is so intensely modern. Swinburne sleeps with it under his pillow and never goes about without it, some one told me, and I once made a list of parallel passages from *Faust*. I like to believe that the conception of Omar, suggested at the end of the Preface, is the truth—that he took a half plaintive and half humorous pleasure in exalting the gratification of sense above that of the intellect. Such an idea exactly agrees with Matthew Arnold's "Mycerinus"—the lines, I mean, in which he suggests that

It may be on that joyless feast his eye  
Dwelt with mere outward seeming ; he within,  
Took measure of his soul and knew its strength,  
And by that silent knowledge, day by day,  
Was calm'd, ennobled, comforted, sustain'd.

Cook's life at the University was indeed very full and many-sided. In the midst of his formal studies and his political and oratorical absorptions he was pursuing his already pronounced taste for literary and artistic criticism. I find that he contributed a long and still very attractive paper on "The Connection between

Poetry and Painting" to *Temple Bar*. Here, too, we are struck with that early maturity of thought and expression to which Lord Sumner makes allusion. Cook had evidently given careful study to Lessing's *Laocoön*, an "old-fashioned" book, as Cook calls it, but still indispensable to every budding critic—the book of which Macaulay said that he had learnt more about art from half an hour's reading of it than from all he had ever read or heard elsewhere. In this paper, however, Cook stresses rather the affinities between literature and fine art than the limits of their respective provinces.<sup>1</sup> A passage from this paper will show how early and successfully Cook was cultivating fields from which he was afterwards to reap so abundant a crop :

He (Wordsworth) would stop sometimes to do a little land-surveying, and he has embodied the results which he thus obtained on one occasion in a poem entitled "The Thorn" :

Not *five yards* from the mountain path,  
This thorn you on your left espy ;  
And to the left, *three yards beyond*,  
You see a little muddy pond  
Of water, never dry ;  
*I've measured it from side to side*,  
*'Tis three feet long and two feet wide*.  
And close beside this aged thorn  
There is a fresh and lovely sight,  
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,  
*Just half a foot in height*.

But very different is Wordsworth's method when he is at his best. He does not then attempt to describe the various and obvious features of the spot ; he gives us instead the spirit of it ; he sees at once to its heart. It is indeed his power of doing this that makes him worthy to rank with the great poets of all ages.

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<sup>1</sup> He superscribed his own copy of the *Temple Bar* Essay with a quotation from Plutarch : "τὸ θρυλούμενον ζωγραφίαν μὲν εἶναι φθεγγομένην τὴν ποίησιν, ποίησιν δὲ σιγῶσαν τὴν ζωγραφίαν" (*De aud. poetis*, c. 3), "poetry, as the saying goes, is vocal painting, and painting silent poetry".

For it is to be observed that what he describes is just as true as are the points which the inferior artist would notice. The ordinary man when the sun rises will see only a round disc of fire somewhat like a guinea. But the poet-painter Blake saw more than this, yet not less truly ; for he pierced through the sensible form to the spiritual meaning, and detected in the radiant sky “an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty !” He questioned not his corporeal eye any more than he would question a window concerning a sight. He looked through it and not with it. Mr. Ruskin drew attention to this distinction in the last course of lectures he delivered at Oxford. The food of Art, he said, is in the ocular and passionate love of nature, not, as some would have it, in the telescopic and dispassionate examination of her. The true artist—be he painter or poet—if he wishes to draw a dog, does not vivisection him, but looks at him and loves him. It is in seizing the real spirit of what he is describing, in seeing what all may see when he unfolds it to them, and in clothing the beautiful vision in the beautiful form of indirect yet adequate expression, that the method and genius of the poet consist. No elaborate description, no accurate statement could bring before us those wonderful Yew Trees in Borrowdale, with half the force and truth and beauty which Wordsworth compresses in the few lines where he speaks of the *Fraternal Four*,

beneath whose sable roof  
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose decked  
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly shapes  
May meet at noontide ; Fear and trembling Hope,  
Silence and Foresight ; Death the skeleton,  
And Time the shadow ; there to celebrate,  
And in a natural temple scattered o’er  
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,  
United worship ; or in mute repose  
To lie and listen to the mountain flood  
Murmuring from Glaramara’s inmost caves.

Cook’s artistic and Ruskinian interest was early manifested and was much stimulated by his successive Continental tours. He writes to Fox from Oxford in the autumn of 1881 :



I have not seen you look so well for a long time as you did the other morning in London. I wish you were up here: I have never seen Oxford look so well either. It is profoundly quiet, and this clear bright weather, with the turning leaves, too, makes it very delightful. There is a great charm in it even when one is fresh from Venice. I have been gloating over memories of Venice with my photographs, for I got some new ones from Ruskin's man this morning. The tiresome creature has just brought out a guide-book to Amiens Cathedral. I wish he had been just a month earlier with it: we wanted a clue to the sculptures badly when we were there. There is a series of Amiens photographs, too, but 5s. each is above my figure. Oh, the usual price of a first edition copy of *Stones of Venice* is from £16 to £20. I had an offer the other day for £9—if I were such an one as you, I should snap it up at once. There are two new architectural things in Oxford—Johns' new buildings and the schools are now finished. I mean to make architecture my recreation this term, and if I ever find myself with dibs enough, I shall take an exeat to see some cathedrals. I want a good photograph of Salisbury to stick in my book opposite St. Mark's.

Cook won a First in Classical Moderations and "Greats". An incident occurred in connection with the former examination about which there is still some slight mystery. Cook failed in "Divvers", that is, in the Divinity part of Moderations. In those days the University considered it essential that every aspirant to her honours should know something of the history of the kings of Israel and Judah as well as of the Articles of Religion. Endless stories are told of this and similar examinations. It is related that a certain undergraduate in the *viva voce* part who was very much at sea was asked at last by the Examiner, "Well, Mr. —, can you tell me what St. Paul's earlier name was?" The examinee returned no answer, but explained afterwards to a friend that of course he knew it was Saul, but he was not going to be such a fool as to lead up to the kings of Israel and Judah. As for the Articles of Religion, the wise

candidate who wished to avoid any suspicion of heresy was well advised to commit them wholly to memory. The futility of those conventional tests is illustrated by a story told in Mr. R. F. Horton's *Autobiography*. Professor Driver, the great Hebraist and Biblical scholar, when about to be ordained, paced Mr. Horton's room in nervous terror lest he should be ploughed in the Bishop's examination.

Cook, it is certain, did not pass in his "Divvers". This was surprising as he had won the Divinity prize before leaving Winchester—so surprising, indeed, that some of his friends concluded he had "scratched" or withdrawn his name with the object of having a "rag" with the Dons. But this explanation in view of Cook's prevailing conduct and character seems to need further explaining. Cook was to "suffer" more than once for political principle, but there is no evidence that he ever aspired to a crown of religious martyrdom as well. There is little doubt that his friend H. F. Fox is right in believing Cook's to have been a genuine failure. But the fine of £10 imposed by the College authorities was a scandal. Cook remonstrated with the Warden, known irreverently as the "shirt", and was permitted after a time to address the assembled Warden and Fellows, but only two in that erudite tribunal, one of them an old schoolfellow, took his side. Cook then appealed to the visitor, a Bishop, who decided that he had no power. If the authorities had deprived Cook of his scholarship, his lordship might have intervened, but not in the case of a small reduction. So the fine was exacted, though it is certain no such treatment would be accorded to-day to a First Class man. "It showed", writes Mr. Fox, "the most dreadful want of sympathy and understanding to let a man like that get fined £10. It shows that nobody had taken the trouble to get to know him. The

dons of those days must have taken a very different view of their duties from what we do now ”.

It has been suggested that this incident ultimately barred Cook's chances of a Fellowship at New College. But there are other reasons, as we shall see, which account for that failure. Dr. Rashdall, the Dean of Carlisle, one of Cook's contemporaries, in a letter from which other quotations will shortly be made, dispels all suspicion that the “Divvers” failure had anything to do with the Fellowship.

Cook preserved two letters of congratulation he received on his high degree. Mr. Alfred Robinson, Fellow of New College and Tutor in “Greats” subjects, wrote: “I congratulate you very much on your First—though of course it is only what I expected. The examiners this time have been less favourable to the College than usual—so it is all the more satisfactory that no mistake should have been made about your class.” From the Hon. G. N. Curzon, his brilliant political antagonist in the Union, he received a generous felicitation: “It is a most remarkable feat in the midst of so many other occupations to get a first in Greats, and I hope it will prove the stepping-stone to new and speedy successes.”

In the summer of this same year (1880) Cook announces with his usual sang-froid, from a weirdly-named house near Bangor, that he had become engaged to Miss Mary Vincent, “the lady of the place with the unpronounceable name”, as Fox described her. This match was broken off. Miss Vincent's brother, of Winchester College and Christ Church, himself a distinguished journalist, and Chancellor of the Diocese of Bangor, married in 1884 Mary Alexandra, Cook's younger sister.

After taking his degree Cook sat for Fellowship

examinations in several Colleges, but, for reasons best known to his examiners, was not elected. At All Souls his subjects were Law and History, which would sufficiently explain his failure, as those were rather outside his beat. He has himself left a humorous account of his attempt at Exeter :

They badgered me (at *viva voce*) for 1½ hours — Nettleship on Logic and Macan on Greek History. I got on fairly well with N., but Macan was awful—an hour of it and he couldn't find any question I could answer. "You give me all the philosophy of the matter", he pathetically exclaimed at the end, "but I want facts"—want had to be his master.

Cook's failure at New College has been attributed by a friend to the "Divvers" incident. The Dean of Carlisle thinks this very unlikely. "I should imagine", he writes to Mr. A. M. Cook, "that your brother was as able a man as M—— who got the Fellowship for which he stood, but I can quite imagine that in the whole range of work, knowledge of the subjects and particularly scholarship, M—— quite fairly won his Fellowship. I was myself a candidate and was told that the order was 1, M—— ; 2, a non-New College man, I think Lindsay of Balliol ; 3, four men almost equal, including your brother". On the whole, I think there is no doubt that Cook, despite his conscientious devotion to his formal studies, had to pay the penalty for having so many irons in the fire, and was at some disadvantage in academic competition with those whose time and attention had been less diffused over a variety of interests.

Mr. Alfred Robinson writes in the letter of congratulation already quoted that he had been informed there were at least five men who would have been placed before Cook on the papers. "You might", he continued, "be the equal of any of them in ability, but their work was very much fuller and more matured than yours" (it

is strange that Cook should have been deficient in "maturity"). "For example, in the Greek translation paper you had omitted altogether the most testing passage. From what you said the other day I conclude that a Fellowship is important to you—so I hope you will now set to work as steadily and systematically as possible. I am sure you may have plenty of hope to keep you going".

Cook was naturally rather sore at these three failures. He writes to a sister who, being of a saving disposition, was collecting waste paper for sale: "I merely added to their waste-paper basket. As it is I'm inclined to think that collecting waste paper is the best thing a man in my condition can turn himself to—there's no competition there. I might invest my savings in a little donkey-cart and go round all the Colleges every morning to sift their rubbish. I'm sure I could get 9s. a day that way which comes to £180 a year about—almost as good as a Fellowship".

Cook was thus reserved for other destinies, but what they were must have seemed at this time very dubious. He threw out feelers in several directions. He ate his dinners in the Inner Temple, but was never called to the Bar. He had also a narrow escape of the Civil Service, as he passed tenth out of twelve in his examination and was, accordingly, offered a place. The details of this result, in view of Cook's future distinctions, are not without interest. It should be premised that the examiners for some reason deducted from the totals 125 marks before any marks were given to a candidate for any subject. Edward Tyas Cook, then, obtained 403 and 460 marks respectively for Greek and Latin out of nominal totals of 750. These were respectable figures, and it is not surprising to find Cook at the head of the twelve for composition and précis, truly journalistic

subjects, with 314 marks out of 500. Only two candidates seem to have taken German—Sidney James Webb, who received 197 marks, and Cook, whose mark is a round O. It is quite as surprising to find Cook receiving only 32 marks out of 500 in literature, which placed him the penultimate of the twelve, and 87 out of 500 for history, in which subject, however, he never seems to have specialised. Probably Cook was only half-hearted in this attempt. He certainly refused the place offered to him, as it did not lead to a Treasury appointment. Otherwise he might have been permanently excluded from that political and party life in which he was to find for thirty years his congenial field of service and distinction.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY JOURNALISM

Nul vent ne faict pour celuy qui n'a point de port destiné ("No wind blows for him who has no destined port").—MONTAIGNE, after Seneca.

A MAN may win the highest academic and political distinctions at Oxford or Cambridge and yet enter the great world with the practical questions of employment and livelihood quite unsettled. Cook left Oxford "for good and all", as he precisely tells us, on Wednesday morning, December 14, 1881, and it was some years before he found his true vocation. But he was already thinking of journalism. He had contributed a little to Mr. Labouchere's paper *Truth* and to *Temple Bar*. Mr. John Morley was then editing the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and Cook expresses a high admiration for his articles, especially those on the Bradlaugh imbroglio. It is rather strange that Morley's name does not appear on the records of the Union Society. He seems not to have aspired to University distinction though he impressed his own circle of friends with his great abilities. It was not difficult for Cook to obtain an introduction to the Editor from his Oxford friends, and he writes to Fox just before going down :

I had a very satisfactory interview with Morley, although nothing much has come of it except that I had an "occasional note" in the other day. . . . He gave me a general invitation to contribute to the *Pall Mall*, when I was settled in London.

I wish you would come, too, for it's very cheap—2-5 rooms for £60 a year.

More than ten years later Cook wrote in the *Young Man*: "When I got my introduction to Mr. John Morley and first went to see him, he asked me if I was an Oxford man. I said 'Yes'; and then he asked me whether I was a very confirmed one—whether, for instance, I was a Fellow of a College. When I said 'No', he said, 'Then there is some hope for you'".

There must be few callings more precarious and wearing than that of a free-lance contributor to the daily Press. Cook's personal introduction to Morley was a great advantage and he proceeded to contribute articles to the *Pall Mall*, which were accepted and published in a steadily growing proportion.<sup>1</sup> During these years of probation Cook had also a little financial stand-by, which saved him from a too complete dependence on the editorial smile or frown, in the Secretaryship of the London University Extension Lectures, which he held from 1881 to 1885.

He was gradually learning the mysteries of his future craft. He seems to have contributed his first formal leading articles to the *Oxford Chronicle*. The earliest of these, dated January 7, 1882, is the conventional "three-decker" on the subject of Liberal organization in Oxford city. One is struck on reading these articles with the maturity of the writer's style. It is surprising that so young a man, who had, moreover, taken as his master and model an author so little distinguished for an austere simplicity of style as John Ruskin, should have written with so few symptoms of youthful exuber-

<sup>1</sup> Cook preserved the earliest of his contributions to the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It was one of those paragraphs or "notes" which were so distinctive a feature of the *Pall Mall* and afterwards of the *Westminster Gazette*. Its subject was a lecture by the Warden of Merton on the Irish Land Act, and it is dated December 6, 1881.



ance or of that malady which in his own sphere of fine art Sir Hubert Herkomer described as "purplitis". There are no purple patches in these articles. They show Cook already in possession of that effectual and finely-tempered instrument which was so adequate to his purposes, so free from mannerism and yet so characteristic. The opening paragraph from a leading article in the *Oxford Chronicle* in December 1882, on "Mr. Gladstone's Jubilee", shows how early Cook had developed a way of writing which disguises its art by its own ease and naturalness :

On the thirteenth of December, 1832, Mr. Gladstone, then a young man fresh from a brilliant University career at Oxford, was returned to Parliament for the borough of Newark. A few days later one of the Conservative journals, in commenting on his election, predicted that he would live to be classed "amongst the most able statesmen in the British senate." Fifty years have passed, and Mr. Gladstone is at this moment the most popular and powerful man in England. Here in Oxford the sentiments of admiration and gratitude on the occasion of his political jubilee will not be less warm and sincere than elsewhere. It was at Oxford that Mr. Gladstone developed the taste for study and the passion for hard work which have distinguished him throughout life ; and it was at the Oxford Union Society that he first learned the arts of eloquence. For eighteen years Mr. Gladstone represented the University of Oxford in Parliament, and although the University has long ago turned its back on one of the most distinguished of its sons, yet Mr. Gladstone's name will always be associated with a place for which he has so often expressed his interest and affection. The citizens of Oxford, moreover, are not likely soon to forget that it was in their Corn Exchange, some five years ago, that Mr. Gladstone dedicated himself to that political campaign which led to the renewed ascendancy of the Liberal party. The feelings which that party entertain towards their great leader are almost without parallel in English politics. Mr. George Russell, the member for Aylesbury, was only speaking truth when he said the other day that with nine-tenths of the

Liberal members in the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone's will was law. The constituencies are certainly not behind their representatives in this confiding loyalty. It used to be the boast of the French kings to be able to say "the State, it is I, and I am the State". So it is with Mr. Gladstone. He is the Liberal party and the Liberal party is Mr. Gladstone.

Cook's work in connection with the Extension Lectures was in the nature of a stop-gap. His duty was to arrange centres and to develop and organize the extension movement in the London area. It appears that he did little lecturing at this time on his own account. He alludes to this work in a letter to Fox from Blackheath (April 1881):

Here am I in biting East winds, travelling about third class from suburb to suburb and suffering fools as gladly as may be. . . . The chief advantage of my work is that it doesn't take up very much time, hardly more than half, although not living in London makes me waste an awful lot of the other time. But then if I did live in London, it would cost so much that it would hardly be worth doing. . . . I am writing this in the British Museum, as a short relaxation from the German editions of the *Poetics*. The work is getting on a little now, but it grows dreadfully, and I am awfully afraid I may get sick of it before it is done.

This projected edition of Aristotle's *Poetics* was never completed. At this period Cook was waiting for the emergence of his real life's task, and engaged in various feverish activities mostly leading no-whither. He applied about this time for a professorship at Nottingham in English Literature, and it is rather strange that a candidate so well qualified and so strongly commended should have been denied. The Destinies were evidently determined that Cook should not enter the cloistered walks of an academic profession.

It appears also from a testimonial supplied by Mr. John Morley that there was some thought of

Cook becoming private secretary to Mr. Carnegie. Mr. Morley writes :

“ PALL MALL GAZETTE ”,  
*June 8, 1883.*

DEAR MR. CARNEGIE—The bearer of this is Mr. E. Cook—a young Oxford man of great ability—a good past and a most promising future. If you can persuade him to become your secretary you will get a prize.—Yours faithfully,

J. M.

This proposal, too, surely one of the most attractive of its kind, fell through, for reasons not now ascertainable.

But the suspense was not long. Cook was soon to be established in a calling which with all its changes and cataclysms held him without any long interruption for a full thirty years. A letter from Mr. Alfred Milner, who had no doubt, as assistant-editor, dealt with much of Cook's “ copy ”, indicates the decisive event :

“ PALL MALL GAZETTE ”,  
NORTHUMBERLAND STREET, STRAND,  
*August 14, 1883.*

MY DEAR COOK—Stead, who is very busy, asks me to return this. It is a good article but there is a squash just now of literary articles.

Should you be prepared to consider the idea of coming on here at a salary ? It is quite in the air as yet and I am not empowered to make you any proposals, though Stead knows that I am mentioning the subject to you. The sort of notion is that you should come here every morning with notes, if notes were wanted—if not, be prepared to do any other work, middle articles on general subjects or descriptive articles on anything that was going on. It would not take your whole time or anything like it, but would be a sort of first charge on it. Waste of time, like that involved in your writing good articles which don't happen to be wanted, would be avoided. Arrangements might be made to prevent its conflicting with University Extension.

Think it over during your holiday. It would be nice to have

the "P.M.G." manned by people one knew and believed in, and left less and less at the mercy of casual contributors.—Yours ever,  
A. M.

No mention of this matter has yet been made to Thompson, so you see how tentative it all is. What one really wants to know is whether it be of any use raising the question.

This is not the earliest letter in the life-long correspondence between Cook and Milner. The latter had left Oxford a few years before Cook, and the first specimen in this collection dates from his early experiences of London life. It has an interest as showing the serious purpose and the touch of mature, or premature, wisdom which marked Cook himself and some of his friends :

54 CLAVERTON STREET, S.W.,  
October 31, 1880.

MY DEAR COOK—If my recollections of Oxford are correct, and they have hardly had time to fade, you are probably so busy at this moment, that you will scarcely care to read this letter and certainly be unable to devote much time to the enclosed list. But perhaps, if you will keep it, it may be of a little use to you some day. I have put a mark to the books which I know to be good. The others are mere names to me.

I am sorry that we have so little opportunity of meeting. You at Oxford can have little idea of the barrenness of a busy life in London. For my own part I find I am doing hard dull work all day with a view to a highly problematical supply of bread and cheese in the future, and then in the evening I read—the papers! A man's mind, like his body, does not thrive on even the most liberal allowance of bran, so after a while there ensues a condition of mental feebleness hardly describable.

Perhaps you think our acquaintance is too slight to justify so long an exposition of my personal feelings. The truth is I can't regard any one whom I have met at those original little gatherings of Toynbee's at the "Inns of Court" and elsewhere as quite a stranger. That sort of discussion is invaluable to me now. I only hope others find some good in it. If circumstances

will ever allow it to lead to a vigorous and constant interchange of ideas among men who have all a living interest in social and political subjects, what an advantage it will be to all of us!—  
Yours sincerely,

A. MILNER.

In the last paragraph of this letter Milner refers to the meetings of certain elect spirits with Arnold Toynbee, with the object of promoting that millennium which to-day seems as far off as ever. Cook's correspondence includes letters from Toynbee, and shows that he was for a time in close and sympathetic touch with that beautiful and unselfish spirit in those days.

Here we must say something about the great paper on which Cook obtained his first regular journalistic appointment and of which he was to become the Editor. The influence and prestige of the *Pall Mall Gazette* now stood very high. For nearly twenty years it had exercised a powerful direction on the internal and external policy of the country. It was once said without gross exaggeration that "the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* came nearer ruling the British Empire than any living man".

The first number of the *Pall Mall* was published on February 7, 1865. Its founder was Mr. George Smith of the famous publishing firm of Smith, Elder and Co., who owed the first suggestion of the paper to Mr. Frederick Greenwood. The latter gentleman had come across a bound volume of the *Anti-Jacobin*, a weekly organ which flourished for a time at the close of the eighteenth century and strangely anticipated some of the most familiar features in print and arrangement of our modern journals. Mr. Greenwood was much attracted by the aspect of this weekly paper with its Canning associations, and formed the idea of an evening journal with columns of the same size and such features as

“Notes of the Day”, familiar to readers of the *Pall Mall* and *Westminster Gazettes*.

The *Pall Mall* had its Thackeray, as the *Daily News* its Dickens, tradition. Though its true progenitor was the old *Anti-Jacobin*, it derived its name from a more modern source. All who have read *Pendennis* remember how a paper called the “Pall Mall Gazette” was started by Bungay, edited by Captain Shandon, sub-edited by Jack Finucane, and counted among its contributors Arthur Pendennis, George Warrington and a large number of notables. “‘Pall Mall Gazette! Why Pall Mall Gazette?’ asked Wagg. ‘Because the editor was born in Dublin, the sub-editor at Cork; because the proprietor lives in Paternoster Row and the paper is published in Catherine Street, Strand. Won’t that reason suffice you, Wagg?’” The phrases will be recalled in which Captain Shandon invited contributions from Pendennis: “‘You would be the very man to help us with a genuine West End article—you understand—dashing, trenchant, and d—— aristocratic’”. The flamboyant prospectus of this mythical journal contains a passage which some people have seriously thought to have been part of the original prospectus of the actual *Pall Mall*:

“We address ourselves to the higher circles of society: we care not to disown it—the Pall Mall Gazette is written by gentlemen for gentlemen; its conductors speak to the classes in which they live and were born. The field-preacher has his journal, the radical free-thinker has his journal; why should the Gentlemen of England be unrepresented in the Press?”

Many people imagine that it was the *Pall Mall Gazette* of fact and not fiction which claimed for itself the character of a paper “written by gentlemen for gentlemen”.

Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who had succeeded

Thackeray as editor of the *Cornhill*, the famous magazine published by Smith, Elder and Co., was not ambitious to edit the paper whose foundation he had suggested. But after he had vainly applied to Thomas Carlyle for an editor from the philosopher's circle of friends, he was obliged to consent. Then came the question of the name. Mr. Greenwood was for "The Evening Review," but Mr. Smith, when talking the subject over with Miss Thackeray, half jokingly suggested that the paper should be christened the "Pall Mall Gazette," like the imaginary journal of her father's romance. Miss Thackeray was delighted and so the new paper was named, though it had no more to do with the Pall Mall of London's clubland than the Dukes of Devonshire had to do with Devonshire.

It is interesting to notice that the first article in the first number of the new paper was a grave and respectful appeal to Her Majesty to please her impatient subjects by abandoning the retirement in which she had lived since the death of the Prince Consort. The paper consisted of eight pages, it cost twopence, and it reproduced exactly many of the attributes of the *Anti-Jacobin*, even the collections of paragraphs headed respectively "Lies" and "Misrepresentations". Among its contributors were Mr. Trollope and Sir Arthur Helps. Its printing office was at the end of one of the long steep passages leading from the Strand to the river. These were the days before the building of the Thames Embankment, and the office was liable to frequent inundation. The new infant was certainly well christened with Thames water and mud.

Though Mr. Greenwood worked sixteen hours a day, the paper had a hard struggle and probably never exceeded a 1500 circulation for a year after its birth. Then came a happy journalistic "hit" of the sort

which was to be repeated more than once in the *Gazette's* subsequent history. It is a well-known story how Mr. James Greenwood, the Editor's brother, went disguised with a friend to Lambeth Workhouse as a "casual pauper", spent a night in that squalor and misery and then wrote an account of their experiences for the *Pall Mall*. This was transcribed into hundreds of papers in Great Britain and gave an immense "fillip" to the fortunes of the new journal as well as a much-needed impetus to workhouse reform.

How the *Pall Mall* became the inspiring organ of British Jingoism and Mr. Gladstone's bitterest opponent, how it secured the Suez Canal shares for England, how it brought the Sepoys to the Mediterranean and substituted Lord Salisbury for Lord Derby at the Foreign Office, how it backed the Turk and inflamed British Russophobia,—these and other exploits of the new journal, from its home in Northumberland Street, need not be related in detail. Its high Tory policy was largely inspired and expressed by the "ponderous Q.C.", afterwards a judge, Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, who at one time contributed a series of letters to the paper in reply to Mr. Mill's essay on "Liberty".

The end of this first and not wholly edifying stage of the paper's history came with the great Gladstonian victory of 1880. Mr. Smith grew tired of owning a newspaper. Like some other proprietors he found that most of the political influence and the personal fame fell to the editor and his staff, while he was left with the financial responsibility. Moreover, the slow-dribbling profits of even the most sparkling of daily papers had become less attractive since he had acquired a monopoly in English-speaking countries of the more paying effervescences of the Apollinaris spring. Anyhow, Mr. Smith, who had spent £25,000 in an attempt to found a morning, as well



as an evening, *Pall Mall*, wearied of a thankless enterprise and handed over his paper to Mr. Henry Yates Thompson, who in 1878 had married his daughter. Now the most important point about this transaction, a point perhaps inadequately considered by Mr. Smith, was that his son-in-law was a Liberal and that the Tory *Pall Mall*, the paper "written by gentlemen for gentlemen", would thus be transferred, lock, stock and barrel, to the Liberal party. Mr. Thompson had served as Lord Spencer's secretary when his lordship was Viceroy of Ireland and had acquired a reputation for "imperturbable courage and self-possession". He was also not without ambitions which might perhaps be furthered by the ownership of a famous and powerful journal. So he accepted his father-in-law's handsome present, and Mr. Frederick Greenwood, not willing to be sold literally as well as metaphorically, went into the wilderness, whence, however, he soon returned with prospects of unlimited finance. Without availing himself of these offers, he started on his own account the *St. James's Gazette*, whither he carried over most of his old staff.

The *Pall Mall* was, therefore, left without captain and crew. How Mr. Thompson, "whose worst flatterers", said Mr. Stead, "never claimed for him the pen of a ready writer", managed to carry on during the first weeks of his proprietorship, is still undivulged. The accumulation of manuscript left in the pigeon-holes by Mr. Greenwood no doubt filled a good many aching voids. An editor had to be found who would repair the severe loss of prestige due to Mr. Greenwood's departure. The choice fell upon Mr. John Morley, who had served his journalistic 'prenticehood on the *Morning Star*, had just been defeated in the parliamentary election at Westminster and was now editing the *Fortnightly Review*. Mr. Morley had to be pressed to accept the offer, and

he made his own terms, which included a substantial salary of £2000 a year.

It speaks well for Mr. Morley's judgment of character and ability that he at once appointed as his assistant Mr. W. T. Stead, the fame of whose exploits as editor of the *Northern Echo* at Darlington had spread to London. All the same probably no two men more dissimilar in temperament, and, though nominally belonging to the same party, in opinion, were ever associated in one task. Mr. Morley was austere and conventional: Mr. Stead was emotional and Bohemian. Mr. Morley hated sensationalism: it was the breath of Mr. Stead's nostrils. Mr. Morley was a convinced Little Englander: Mr. Stead an equally convinced Imperialist. It was well that a Morley *régime* of a few years should have been interposed between the reigns of Greenwood and Stead. Morley carried forward the tradition of dignity and decorum with which Mr. Greenwood had invested the editorship, and restored the prestige of the paper by his already established personal distinction. A writer in *The Times* described the Morley-Stead partnership as "a union of classical severity with the rude vigour of a Goth". But the tone of the paper during these few years shows that "classical severity" was the dominant note, and that the Gothic influence was kept under effectual control. So much so indeed, that Mr. Stead is understood to have painfully acquired "Morleyese" and to have written it with submission and docility.

Cook tells an amusing story about this partnership in his diary under date August 1892. Stead had been to see John Morley at that time. Quoth the Irish Secretary: "As I said to my wife, 'It's no joke in Ireland with Redmondites, Ulster and all the rest of it. But as I kept Stead in order for three years, I don't see why I shouldn't govern Ireland'".

We seem to be writing ancient history in recording that Morley's editorship was remarkable, firstly for his persistent support of Chamberlain before that formidable Jacobin had as yet got his feet fairly into national politics, and secondly for his advocacy of Parnell and Parnellism as against Forster and Forsterism. Mr. Morley was not by natural vocation a journalist. His method of editing, Mr. Stead tells us, was to choose a number of experts and get them to write articles when their subjects turned up : a thoroughly bad policy, which Stead challenged for reasons which every journalist would endorse and which seem to have shaken even Mr. Morley himself.

"Suppose", said Mr. Morley, "you had to have an article, say, on sun spots, would you get an astronomer to write it, who knows everything about the subject, or a journalist who knows nothing?" "The journalist most assuredly," I (Stead) replied. "If you get an astronomer to write the article he will write it for astronomers, and use terms which your readers will not understand, and his article will be full of allusions which can only be appreciated by experts. The net effect of the article will be that your reader will not learn what you want him to learn". "But", said Mr. Morley, "is that not setting ignorance to instruct ignorance?" "By no means. It is setting a man who is intelligent to tap the brains of the specialist, and then to serve his knowledge up so that it can be understood by the ordinary reader".

Mr. Morley left the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1883, six months after he had entered Parliament as Member for Newcastle; but it was not, as some people think, from his editorial chair on that paper that he was summoned by Mr. Gladstone to higher spheres. Cook learnt the true facts from Mr. Morley himself when lunching with him more than twelve years later :

J. M. described the only leaders he had written for the *Daily News*. It was in 1886 by way of leading up to the Home Rule

Bill. He went to the G.O.M. and said he would write leaders turning the *D.N.* if he would tell him what was in his mind. "He told me, and I wrote three. I was in the middle of the fourth, when a note came from the G.O.M. asking me to call. I went and he offered me the Irish Secretaryship. I was very much surprised. I said I must consult Jo (Chamberlain) first, as I always did. Jo said, 'D— him! I knew he would do it'. I funk'd it, being entirely new to office, but said I supposed I shouldn't respect myself if I refused. Jo said, 'Oh, of course you must take it'. I returned to the G.O.M., and finished the leader—such is my devotion to editorial commands."

Mr. Morley was succeeded in the editorship by Mr. Stead, and the paper soon began to move forward with a speed which would have justified a respelling of its title. "In the opinion both of friends and foes", wrote Mr. Stead very credibly in after days, "we made things hum. Without ceasing to be strenuous the paper became alive, and vigorously alive. No doubt we failed and came far short of our ideal, but not even our bitterest critics will deny that we struggled towards the ideal which was set before us". For spaciousness of idea and outlook the writer has met no one who could be compared with Stead, unless it were Cecil Rhodes. There were, indeed, many affinities between these two men, and one of the first things Rhodes used to do on his emergencies in London from the desert and the jungle was to call on Stead in his office in Mowbray House. It is said that Rhodes had once had the intention of appointing Stead his sole trustee under the famous testament.

And Stead had not only big ideas but inexhaustible powers of expression. Few men were ever so copious and at the same time so vigorous and original. Stead could overflow into vast spaces of letterpress without ever running thin and shallow. It would be hard to overstate Stead's influence on British journalism. He struck the "personal note", introduced the interview

and the daily illustration, lit up the page with the eye-arresting headline and crosshead, and developed the special article and the signed contribution. No man was less mercenary or commercially-minded than Stead, whose dominant motive in all his journalistic work was the promotion of great moral and political purposes.

Cook, who of course knew Stead intimately, wrote after the *Titanic* disaster :

Mr. Stead was of all men the most unworldly, and of editors the least susceptible to the "business side". But in another sense he was a consummate master in the art of attracting "the copper alms". He knew, that is to say, that a newspaper in order to have influence must be read, and that an editor's first business, therefore, is to make his sheet readable. He must have circulation—not by any means necessarily "the widest circulation", but circulation amongst the people in many spheres who count for most. This was what Mr. Stead set himself to attract to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, both when he was assistant-editor under Lord Morley and during his own editorship.

Stead was not a "fee-first man". In journalism the essential thing for him, Cook tells us, was "to teach and preach zealously for the love of God".

Stead's name was for years so much associated with aggressive pro-Boerism and extravagant spiritisms that his services to the cause of a rational imperialism have been overlaid with other impressions. Probably no man did more in the dark days which preceded the dawn of the modern Imperial ideas to resist the policy of "scuttle" and to teach the meaning and mission of the British Commonwealth. Mr. Stead's Imperialism was very distinct in type from that of his predecessor, Mr. Frederick Greenwood. Seeley's *Expansion of England*, a book which has influenced political thought in this country more than any other and did so much to purify and enlighten the Briton's ideas about his Empire, was published in the year in which Stead became editor of the

*Pall Mall Gazette*. It gave to that Liberal Imperialism which Stead confessed and preached much of its inspiration. Stead was a Home Ruler before Mr. Gladstone, but his Irish views were conditioned by his Imperialism. Home Rule was to be a step towards Imperial Federation, and when Mr. Gladstone showed his indifference to Empire principles by excluding the Irish members from Westminster in the 1886 Bill, Stead fell upon that ill-conceived measure with fire and slaughter.

It was in these days that the creed of Liberal Imperialism, Cook's political faith throughout his life, was first formulated. Stead drew up for the members of his staff a confession of faith which he called "the Gospel according to the *P.M.G.*" or "an imperfect outline of the things which are most surely received among us". This long but vigorous statement includes much that is still sound doctrine, and it explains incidentally why Stead was able to work with men like Milner and Cook who differed so greatly from him in tradition and temperament. Stead's creed opens with a long section about the "kingdom of Heaven", but it subsides after a time on to more terrestrial and secular subjects. As this confession embodies the policy of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and as it coincided with Cook's own lifelong principles, I will quote a paragraph which, dating from the early eighties, before the first Jubilee Procession, does credit to Stead's insight and foresight :

What is the greatest political phenomenon of our time ? It is the multiplication and diffusion of the English race. In a hundred years we have entered into possession of the world. Including the United States, which is as English as Hampshire although lying outside the Queen's dominions, we number close upon a hundred millions of English-speaking men, ruling over nearly three hundred millions of native subjects. The sovereignty of the sea is ours ; and ours are the multitude of the isles. One

half of the New World is exclusively our own. So is the island-continent of Australia, and well-nigh the whole of Southern Asia and Southern Africa. Empire such as ours there is not in all the world, nor ever has been. The peopling of the waste places with men of our blood, of our race, of our religion and of our laws, goes on without ceasing. Unless it is checked, the end of another century will see the world divided into two halves—one half speaking English as a native tongue, the other half learning it as the *lingua franca* of the human race. Of all problems, therefore, the most important is to keep these great and growing English-speaking States in friendly alliance, if not in political union. The Federation of the British Empire is the condition of its survival. As an Empire we must federate or perish. If our foreign policy is to be one, one government must represent all. If all are to be equally exposed to danger of attack, all must share equally in providing for defence. No one proposes to attempt to wed together the ocean-sundered free republics under the British flag by the loose bonds of a centralized administration. There should be the minimum control from the centre compatible with the maximum of efficient co-operation in such affairs as are common to all parts of the Empire, and even this minimum can only be safely exercised when the controlled are fully represented at the centre of control. Nothing should be forced, but everything fostered that makes for the enfranchisement of the Englishmen beyond the sea at present without a voice in the government of the Empire, the future of which they will some day control.

Stead was the sworn foe not only of the Little Englander but of the Little Navyite. We are better able to appreciate to-day, after the awful challenge of 1914-18, our obligations to the men who helped to keep the Empire together and to maintain our naval strength against all insidious opposing forces in the years that went before. Stead's *Truth about the Navy*, and his persistent fostering of British sea-power in the Press, followed by his insistence in later years on the formula of "two keels to one" against Germany,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Fisher wrote after Stead's death: "Stead was a missionary himself all his life. Fearless even when alone; believing in his God—the God of truth—

had their desired effect, and we reaped the fruits of these and other similar efforts when the great struggle began.

Stead would have been a great power to-day behind the League of Nations for which he did so much to prepare the way. He laboured to improve Anglo-Russian relations and was a constant advocate of Anglo-American friendship. His "Peace Crusade" occupied much of his later life, and he embarked on the ill-fated *Titanic* in 1912 in order to address a New York meeting on the "World's Peace", and to take part in the "Man and Religion Forward Movement".

It is worth noting that the modern newspaper in its main attributes was created, not by those who claim to have converted journalism from a profession to a business, but by men like Cook and Stead, to whom the "commercial spirit" was anathema, and who were at all times ready to sacrifice position and livelihood to principle and conscience. Strangely enough, it was Stead, the apostle and martyr, who popularized and even sensationalized the modern newspaper, but he was willing to leave others to gather in the "copper alms". Cook tells us that in an account cabled to the *Star* of Mr. Stead's table-talk on board the *Titanic*, he is reported as saying that he had impressed on Mr. Hearst the importance of giving a "soul" to "sensational journalism". By a soul, writes Cook, Stead meant "a definite moral purpose in some social movement or political reform". This was indeed "the essence of Mr. Stead's own journalism".

Not all the schemes of W. T. Stead matured successfully. For example, he bore the main responsibility

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and his enemies always rued it when they fought him. He was an exploder of 'gas-bags' and the terror of liars. He was called a 'wild man' because he said, 'Two keels to one'. He was at Berlin—the High Personage said to him, 'Don't be frightened!' Stead replied to the All Highest, 'Oh, no! we won't! For every Dreadnought you build we will build two!' That was the genesis of the cry, 'Two keels to one'. I have a note of it made at the time for my *Reflections*".



for the despatch of Gordon into the Soudan. When Cook joined the staff of the *P.M.G.* Stead was about to drop his biggest and loudest bomb into London life in the form of the revelations entitled "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." Whether in this case the end justified the means, or whether the end could not have been attained by other means, was doubted then and may still be doubted by many people.

When Cook joined the staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette* the assistant-editor under Mr. Stead was Mr. Alfred, afterwards Viscount, Milner. It is rather singular that Stead should have been associated in succession with three very distinguished Oxford men, Morley, Milner and E. T. Cook. In character, temperament and tradition he bore little resemblance to any of these three. The points of his dissimilarity to Mr. Morley have already been mentioned. He was so much the reverse of Alfred Milner also in many respects that one can scarcely imagine the two as even temporary yoke-fellows. There was nothing in Stead corresponding to Milner's sangfroid and enigmatic calm. It is related that when in the Union debates members shouted to Milner, whose voice was always rather subdued, to "speak up", he would wait until he had a more perfect silence and would then deliberately speak lower. That was very characteristic of Milner, but could never have been so of Stead, for he never required any exhortation to speak up.

Stead wrote some humorous reminiscences of his greatly-to-be-distinguished lieutenant in the *Review of Reviews* for July 1899. A few passages may interest and amuse :

When Milner was working with me at Northumberland Street one of the things he did every day was to go through the proofs of my leading articles before they were printed and "tone them down". He would squirm at an adjective here, reduce a super-

lative there, and generally strike out anything that seemed calculated needlessly to irritate or offend. He was always putting water in my wine. He was always combing out the knots in the tangled mane of the *P.M.G.*, and when the lion opened his mouth Milner was always at hand to be consulted as to the advisability of modulating the ferocity of its roar. That is my abiding memory of Milner in the *P.M.G.* He stood as guardian armed with ruthless pen ever on guard against any expression that seemed strained or any utterance that rung false by excess of vehemence.

When I started some new escapade M. entered thoroughly into the fun of the thing. "What larks!" he would frequently exclaim.

Milner wrote a sketch of me once at the time of the "Maiden Tribute" in some magazine. I think the unkindest thing he said about me was that I was a kind of compound of Don Quixote and Phineas T. Barnum.

Cook was even more unlike his chief. He was somewhat diffident in manner and disposition: Stead was troubled with no such frailty. It is on record that Stead the elder once remarked to his son: "You would do much better, William, if you would occasionally leave God to manage His universe in His own way". Cook was placid, deliberate, not easily moved: Stead was tumultuous, impulsive and emotional.

Cook brought to his journalistic task the highest culture of a great public school and of a great college in an old university. Journalism is the least, as the Bar is perhaps the most, protected of professions. Anybody may be a journalist who can come by a pen and ink and a sheet of paper. There are no examinations to pass, and no fees to pay. It is in other respects a curious calling. Sir Sidney Low once remarked that a man often begins at the top and gradually but persistently descends the rungs of the ladder. Some day we may have a biography written with the title "From Editor to Office-boy."

Cook, like Morley and Milner, entered journalism, so to speak, "at the top". Unlike them he stayed in it, while for them it was but a *deversorium* on the way to more illustrious, though perhaps not more useful, employment.

Stead, on the other hand, was a self-made man. He received his only formal education at a Nonconformist school in Wakefield, and this lasted only until he was fourteen years of age. Stead was earning his living in a merchant's office at Newcastle at an age when Cook had still some years of his Winchester life before him. It is true Stead was unexpectedly summoned from his salaried clerkship to become editor of the *Northern Echo*, but this work on a provincial paper was a sort of apprenticeship "in the ranks" which Cook never served.

Cook, again, was a Churchman, though a Liberal Churchman, by birth and education, while Stead was a Nonconformist, the son of a Nonconformist minister, with a strong Puritanic and Cromwellian tradition. Stead brought with him into journalism no academic or social distinction, nothing but his great abilities, tremendous energy and ardent convictions. But Cook's advantages had not made him an intellectual prig or a social snob. He was far too broad-minded not to appreciate Stead's great qualities and to recognize the large field of opinion and purpose they held in common.

Stead and Cook were both Liberals by natural instinct, both lovers of liberty, and believers in democratic progress. They were also both Liberal Imperialists—that is, they looked at political problems from an Empire point of view. Stead, it is true, was to become the most uncompromising of pro-Boers; but that was characteristic of his tangential mobilities, and simply meant that a passion stronger than his Liberal Imperialism had hold of him at the time—in this case the fierce militancy of his Peace Crusade.

It is doubtful whether Cook would have managed much longer to pull in harness with Stead. We shall see before long how difficult the position of a man hitched to such a meteor was apt to become. But that they should have managed, despite their differences, to work together for six or seven years and continue a warm friendship beyond the parting and to Stead's tragic end, speaks well for the character of both men. After Cook himself had left the editorship of the *Pall Mall* he wrote an article at Stead's request giving his impressions of the paper and some interesting reminiscences of his early days thereon :

I hardly know where to begin my answer to your very large question, "What I think the distinguishing features of the *Pall Mall* as I have known it?" I first took up with the *Pall Mall* as a daily companion shortly after I left Oxford, and I have never changed it for a day ever since. Its features must have changed a great deal, and several times, during this period, but I suppose daily companions are the last people in the world to notice changes in the features of their friends.

The greatest change perceptible to me was when you became editor. I didn't know much of the inside of the office during Mr. Morley's time, but I well remember what seemed to me the distinguishing features of the *Pall Mall* under him. It delighted us at Oxford with its grave, philosophic radicalism, its deliberate and weighty reviews and its subdued style. It dealt with practical politics, and, as we know, influenced them deeply. But it did so, as it seemed to us outsiders, without any striving or crying or bustling, by mere force of the application of general doctrines, philosophically arrived at, to particular questions.

Between the conception of journalism which I had thus formed and the reality as I found it when I joined the regular staff of the *Pall Mall* under Mr. Morley's successor, what a change ! I found myself suddenly thrust into what Matthew Arnold called "the new Journalism", with its "novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy and generous instincts". The paper became a daily incarnation of its editor—a demon for work, insatiable in

curiosity and interest, and ceaseless in his interrogation of public opinion.

Cook goes on to say how Stead made of the *P.M.G.* during his own period of editorship "a kind of general information and benevolence bureau":

I remember, he continues, being very much struck with this on the very first day after you left, when the callers at Northumberland Street included, in addition to the usual *posse* of political and journalistic visitors, an old Yorkshireman who had a doctrine to preach on the sinfulness of soft mattresses; an Irish peer who wanted to ascertain some facts about rent reduction; a disappointed legacy-hunter who had been "defrauded of his just rights"; and finally a little girl whose mother was in distress and had been assured that the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* would tell her how to dispose of her sewing-machine to the best advantage. I'm quite sure you would have done so. You would have found time for that and for anything that the caprice or necessity of anybody had added to your day's work. Besides this was all part, and only a very trivial illustration, of your general theory of a newspaper as an active and governing force, rather than merely a critical and reflecting medium. And that, I suppose, was the broadest of the features which distinguished the *Pall Mall* as I knew it during those years.

In these last sentences Cook clearly elicits the spirit of the Stead regime on the *Pall Mall*. It was significant that Stead adopted "Vatican" as his telegraphic address. He himself proposed to set up as a sort of secular Pope, adjudicating infallibly and irresistibly on all manner of questions, and his paper was to be almost an organ of government, not merely British but oecumenical. Cook could express more freely in private his general impressions of the *Pall Mall Gazette* during his early connection therewith. To his dear friend, Fox, he writes (April 21, 1884):

The *P.M.G.* is rather a different thing from what it was in Morley's time, and a strange mixture of good and bad. . . .

Whatever else you may say, I really don't think there's any other paper with such lots of interesting stuff in it as the *P.M.G.* And then what a storehouse of surprises it is ! You never know whether you will hear the voice of culture (that's me, you know, and Milner), or the blatantest vulgarity.

It has been mentioned that the personal "interview" was one of the features of the "New Journalism" introduced by Stead into the *Pall Mall*. This useful (and inexpensive) method of eliciting opinion and information is now so familiar that we forget that it was once a novelty. Any professional journalist would to-day interview the Archbishop of Canterbury or even the *bon Dieu* himself without any of the tremors felt and described by Cook :

Never shall I forget my consternation when as a first job whereon to try my 'prentice hand you ordered me off to interview the Archbishop of Canterbury—on anything and everything ; nor my surprised relief when his Grace received me immediately as your representative, and half humorously but wholly good-naturedly submitted himself to half an hour's catechism in his room at the House of Lords. I thought it a great catch, and I remember being rather disappointed that you didn't print it as a "follower". But we were prodigal of "copy" in those days ; and as for an archbishop consenting to be interviewed, that seemed almost a matter of course.

On entering the *Pall Mall Gazette* office Cook threw in his lot once for all with professional journalism. We have seen how he had qualified himself for other walks in life and how easily he might have been diverted into some other calling. But having once entered journalism he was true to it as long as it was true to him. Some surprise has been expressed that Cook never entered Parliament. He would no doubt have been a success in the House of Commons as he would have been at the Bar. He had a range of practical and available ability, apart from his literary genius, which would have given

him success in almost any vocation. A parliamentary seat, moreover, would have been a natural sequel of his political distinction at Oxford. As early as 1880 he had been approached by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Robert Buckell with a view to his becoming candidate for Oxford city. "It would be to me a great pleasure to see you in Parliament and on the road to that success which I have in my own mind marked out for you." Cook, indeed, became one of the selected candidates with Sir E. Wood and Sir U. K. Shuttleworth. But the money question was a difficulty. A considerable expense fell on to the candidate, unless his charges were paid from the party-funds, which meant necessarily a sacrifice in independence. The final choice of a candidate was, however, postponed owing to the difficulties arising from a Parliamentary Petition and a temporary disfranchisement of the borough.

But Cook was to be tempted into parliamentary life on more than one future occasion. In June 1886 he received the following letter from Mr. Alfred Milner :

MY DEAR COOK—I don't know whether you are back yet or not. If you are, and hear from (Lord) Dalhousie, as you may do, about a "safe Liverpool seat", will you think twice before refusing it? I take the liberty of an old friend to urge this on you. It will not interfere with your journalism—rather increase your value (I don't mean in a pecuniary sense) as a journalist, and open a wider career for which you are naturally fitted. I would not say one word about it, if you would not conscientiously stand as a Government candidate, but, if I remember rightly, you always have been and are a Home Ruler, and for able men of that persuasion the present seems to be an unparalleled chance. It is the only question before the country.

I write in ignorance, not knowing whether the offer has been, or will be, made to you, but thinking it so great a likelihood, that it is well worth while to throw the modest weight of my advice into the scales, should you happen to be balancing them.

I don't write a long letter full of reasons, but you will give me credit for having them. It is not merely fidgety eagerness to give thoughtless advice. Every man of sense is the best judge of his own affairs, but then the opinions of friends are part of the material of such judgment. Please regard my intrusion in that light. I do feel very strongly about it.—Yours ever,

A. M.

Milner was one of Cook's contemporaries whom he persistently regarded, whether justly or not, as his superior in wisdom and ability, and he cannot have lightly regarded a letter such as this, so sincere in thought and feeling and so admirable in expression. But he had his own definite ideas about the attempt to serve two masters, Parliament and Press. When he left the *Pall Mall* he was succeeded by Mr. H. J. C. Cust, who at the time was a Member of Parliament. Of Mr. Cust Cook wrote in the above-quoted article written at Stead's request: "He is at present attempting to do two incompatible things—to sit in the House of Commons and to edit the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Mr. Morley tried it, under circumstances much more favourable than those under which Mr. Cust is making the attempt, and Mr. Morley found it impossible. Mr. Cust will have to choose between the House of Commons and the editorial sanctum. If he has any journalistic instinct in him, he will not hesitate a moment as to which course he will pursue".

The cost of a parliamentary candidature was now a still more important consideration, for in the meantime Cook had become a married man. His wife, whom he had married in 1884, was Emily Constance Baird, the daughter of J. Forster Baird of Northumberland. The eldest of the seven daughters is Mrs. Lionel Smith, wife of the present Master of Balliol; another is Dorothea Baird, who became the wife of the actor, Mr. H. B.



Irving, son of Sir Henry Irving, and won for herself a great reputation on the stage in the part of the barefooted Trilby. Cook's marriage was a true and happy companionship. Mrs. Cook was a lady of literary taste and joint-author with her husband of a very charming guide to London.<sup>1</sup> Her early death in 1903 was a blow from which Cook never completely rallied.

Cook had later offers of parliamentary constituencies, among them another from Oxford. But at this time he was probably right in resisting the proposal. He was now getting "settled" in life, married and in an absorbing and congenial profession. He was indeed putting off distractions rather than seeking new ones. In the autumn of 1885 he had written to Mr. (afterwards Viscount) Goschen, resigning his position as Secretary of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching which he had held for nearly four years, with full satisfaction to the society, as is evident from Mr. Goschen's regretful acceptance of his resignation. Cook had then a clear course before him for his journalistic work and for those literary and artistic pursuits which, though independent interests, also fed and enriched his journalism.

<sup>1</sup> *Highways and Byways of London.*

## CHAPTER IV

### EARLY DAYS ON THE "PALL MALL"

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer ("Tireless, irritable, inexorable, impetuous").—HOR. *De arte poet.* 121.

COOK must have known when he took a position on the *Pall Mall Gazette* that he was joining hands with an incalculable force. But Stead had not as yet fully revealed himself. It was in 1885 that he achieved his *opus magnum* in those shock-tactics which figured so largely in his strategy. The history of that famous apocalypse of evil known as "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" belongs to Stead's life rather than to Cook's. But Cook had to live through the tempest and indeed to stand at the helm during its later stages. Stead's object in launching this campaign was wholly commendable. It was to give a lift to a Criminal Law Amendment Bill for the better protection of young girls, whose chances of becoming law during the session appeared to be small. With this object he collected and published in the *Pall Mall* his "revelations", which ran into fifty-seven columns before they ended, and while they shocked and scandalized the pure-minded, provided prurient people with an incomparable feast of garbage. No one can believe that the additional 80,000 per day of circulation which the "Maiden Tribute" brought to the *Pall Mall* was in any large proportion attracted by a genuine indignation at a social abuse.

Stead seems to have thought that any methods and sacrifices were justified by his moral object. One wonders if he ever recalled a certain scene in *As You Like It*, where Shakespeare has a decisive word on this subject. Says the melancholy Jaques :

Give me leave  
To speak my mind, and I will through and through  
Cleans the foul body of the infected world,  
If they will patiently receive my medicine.  
*Duke S.* Fie on thee ! I can tell what thou wouldst do.  
*Jaq.* What, for a counter, would I do but good ?  
*Duke S.* Most mischievous foul sin in chiding sin.

"Foul sin in chiding sin"—no one who reads any description of London streets in these days when Stead had turned the moral sewers into them can entirely acquit him of such transgression.

Cook has not left us any expression of his own private feeling during this experience. It is impossible that he should have wholly approved Stead's methods. He has left in the early pages of his diary a disgustful account of a wild expedition in which he was whirled over London by "three ghouls" of the social purity brigade, one of whom, he remarks, was "as strong as a horse". There must have been much in the accessories and personnel of this drama very uncongenial to a man of Cook's temperament. His position was difficult. From some of his friends he was receiving letters of strong disapprobation of the campaign. Mr. Lyttelton Gell, who writes from Balliol College, is among these. Cook had evidently asked his friend's opinion. Mr. Gell writes :

You put me in a very difficult position and I scarcely know how to answer your letter. Stead says, "Every decent clean-living Englishman" who admits the truth of his facts, the enormity of the evil, the need of legislation, therefore approves the conduct of the "P.M.G." in his method of publication. I emphatically do not. The best men I know agree with me, when

it is all over, the *Pall Mall* will be found to have lost caste and influence, which I, out of respect for Stead, for yourself and the independence of the paper, deeply regret.

I need not say again what I said before that we applaud Stead for the marvellous investigation. What we condemn is the outrage of publication in this form, the brutality of detail, the beastly placards in the streets. I was in London on Tuesday week and saw the foul *canaille* who sell "Towntalk" pushing this under every nose all along the Strand, and the same foul *canaille* buying it. I saw speculators in bawdy literature shouting out the details of the placards into the ears of women and children. I saw the boys buying and gloating; and in Whitechapel, where the paper generally is not for sale, there was a roaring trade amongst the class whose morals you know as well as I. . . .

I think that in a fortnight the "P.M.G." has perceptibly lowered the tone of sexual refinement and of modesty throughout English society. The corrupt gloat over the paper for its spice; the innocent might have been moved to right indignation by a treatment far more reverent and reserved.

On the other hand Cook received letters of equally strong approbation. "I am not vain enough of my order", writes one of these, "to suppose that the 'P.M.G.' wants the congratulation of country curates, but I want *liberare animam meam* by thanking you for waking myself with a host of others to the existence of a state of things which might have horrified Juvenal. I don't know how far you personally have done it: but I want to thank some one". Nonconformity and active philanthropy were generally ranged on Stead's side. Toynbee Hall, where Barnett preached on the "Revelations", was enthusiastic. Stead himself was in his element. He rode the tempest with complete satisfaction, though in the end he failed to control the storm.

Alfred Milner, like Cook, had to undergo experiences for which he was in no way responsible. By this time he was sitting rather light in journalism. For twelve

months he had been considering whether he should resign his assistant-editorship. "I really cannot give the paper the time which it requires", he wrote to Cook during a temporary absence in July 1885; "and, even if I could, I am no longer prepared to accept the embarrassments which its sayings and doings cause me. It was bad enough while one agreed more or less with Stead, but when one differs violently about three things out of every four, it is rather too much to suffer for one's supposed approval of what one hates". Later in the month, when the storm still blew, Cook was absent, and Milner informs him about the happenings in Northumberland Street. "Stead talks, writes and thinks of nothing else but his virgins, past or present (the Criminal Law Amendment Bill being at present before the Commons, they are perhaps more exacting than usual), and I do comfortably and with ease what little reference to the world in general the paper still condescends to make". Milner then gives an account of the scenes in London which fully bears out Mr. Gell's description. There was some hope that Stead would be entrapped on the spur of the moment into taking a holiday. "Sooner or later he will get bored with all this and then will allow himself to be despatched and lie by *for a week*, evolving in his great mind the germs of another sensation".

The sequel of the affair for Stead is well known. One of the most shocking of the revelations had been the story of a little girl (Eliza Armstrong), who, it was alleged, had been sold by her parents. It was discovered by *Lloyd's News* that the child had in fact been procured by an agent of Stead's without the connivance of her parents. Stead had been deceived by his agent and rendered himself liable to an indictment for abduction. He was sentenced in November at the Central Criminal Court to three months' imprisonment, becoming

a few days later a first-class misdemeanant and continuing to conduct his paper from "a not incommensurable cell" in Holloway Gaol.

It is a tribute to the sterling qualities of Stead's character that even the experiences of the "Maiden Tribute" crusade did not alienate the loyalty of his staff, including that of Milner and Cook. Before the date of Stead's prosecution Milner had left the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He joined in the rally of Stead's friends around him at that trying moment. On October 6, 1885, he wrote to Cook :

Any man who wishes Stead well should not hang back now. Personally I wish one could do something practical to show one's sympathy with him, and if anything is being done I should be very glad to co-operate. You know how little I liked the Revelations, and that I never said one word about the whole hubbub at a time it was the fashion to win cheers by references to "The New Crusade". But this persecution has raised an entirely new issue, and I shall certainly take every opportunity to say what I think about the Armstrong case.

Cook in the meantime had succeeded Milner as assistant-editor, and well indeed it was for Stead and for the *Pall Mall* that so trustworthy a helmsman was available in the then prevailing weather. Cook's leading article on the morrow of Stead's conviction, entitled "The Sentence, and After", was a model of dignified restraint, which, by its revelation of a new and cooler hand in the direction of the paper, must have done much to restore its prestige and to win back many an alienated friend.

As for Stead, was he not emulating in modern London the fortunes of many an early Christian martyr ? Was he not in the true apostolic succession ? We may imagine the inner glow of self-approving emotion with which he dated his first letter to his assistant-editor

from the prison. Like St. Paul at Philippi he made friends with his fellow-prisoners and with his gaoler, the governor, who presented him with the prison clothes he had first worn at Coldbath Fields. That uniform, his "Order of the Broad Arrow", he wore at the receptions he always gave his friends on future anniversaries of his conviction. Stead would often refer to his imprisonment in after days in some such subordinate phrase as "When I was in gaol", uttered without a tremor or a smile, as if going to gaol were as ordinary an event in a respectable person's lifetime as going to bed or to the seaside. On New Year's Eve he writes to Cook from Holloway :

I wish you a very happy New Year, and I am sufficiently unselfish to wish that you may be in gaol next New Year's Eve instead of me. I can wish you no happier fate. I have had a glorious time and feel like the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration when they thought they would like to stop there for ever.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly Stead had little reason to worry about his paper. He was indeed quite alive to his good fortune in having such a lieutenant as Cook, a good fortune of which he took full advantage in many subsequent absences on his business as vice-gerent of the Universe. The following letter gives a glimpse of Cook's efficiency in the responsible position so suddenly thrust upon him :

HOLLOWAY PRISON, LONDON,  
December 19, 1885.

DEAR MR. COOK—I have this afternoon received a copy of your Election Extra, and I hasten to write you my very hearty

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<sup>1</sup> Stead's New Year's card of greeting displayed a portrait of himself with the legend, "God, even my God, hath anointed me with the oil of gladness above my fellows", and a picture of the towers and battlements of Holloway, more like a castle of romance meet for the captivity of a knight-errant than a modern gaol.

congratulations upon the admirable way in which you and your staff have turned out much the heaviest piece of work that has ever been done in the way of political and statistical Extras at our office or indeed at any other.

You have not only succeeded in producing the earliest and most complete of all manuals to the General Election of 1885, but you have accomplished what has never been achieved before. You have made the biographies of members readable by others than themselves and the scribes who do these obituary notices.

As I survey the enormous amount of work that there has been done in getting up this mass of statistical and biographical information I am more than ever inclined to bless Lopes, Poland, *Lloyd's*, etc. It is now quite clear to me that I was sentenced to imprisonment chiefly in order that I might avoid the hard labour which was waiting the unfortunate unconvicted members of the staff at Northumberland Street.

The above of course applies to all those who worked with you, but I wish especially to express to you personally the very high sense which I have learned to entertain during these last months of your journalistic capacity, your judgment, your industry and your tact. I know no similar instance of so young a man so suddenly entrusted with the conduct of a London paper at such a critical time, and I know no one, old or young, who could have come better through the ordeal. Again congratulating you very sincerely,—I am yours gratefully,

W. T. STEAD.

Just after his release, Stead writes again to Cook : “ I cannot express to you my sincere thankfulness that you were in charge of the ‘ P.M.G.’ when I was in Holloway. Otherwise I fear I should have been miserable indeed ”.

Whatever we may think of the sacrifices involved, Stead’s campaign did achieve its original object. Not only was the Criminal Law Amendment Act passed into law but an impulse which might otherwise not have been set in motion was given to the international efforts to deal with the abuses of the “ White Slave Trade ”.



"The justification of the unofficial apocalypse of evil", wrote Cook in his leading article, "was that the official one (*i.e.* the Report of the Lords' Committee) had fallen on deaf ears". The reader must judge for himself whether in this case the desired end justified the undesirable means.

Mr. Stead, it will have been noticed, alludes to one of those "Extras" which were a characteristic feature of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. That entitled *Mems. of Members or Guide to the House of Commons* was Cook's own idea and largely his own work. Edition after edition was brought out, and it became as indispensable as Dodd and Debrett, and much cheaper and more readable. Cook's guides, whether political or artistic, were never lifeless catalogues. About these *Mems. of Members*, as originally published in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he used to tell an amusing story. The authors discovered about one blameless member the equally blameless fact that he was once the superintendent of a Sunday school. They set it down, and by the next post there came an indignant protest and a request that the "mem." should be expunged—for, said the irate M.P., "don't you know I now represent a sporting constituency?" Next day came another letter from another M.P. saying, "May I ask why you have not stated that I also was once a Sunday school teacher? Do you not know that I represent a Nonconformist constituency?" So difficult was it, Cook would say, for journals, with the best intentions, to please everybody.

*The Art Extra*, with its reproductions of Academy pictures, became, thanks also to E. T. Cook, very popular and profitable, and it is necessary only to mention *The Truth about the Navy and the Coaling Stations, Too Late or the Story of General Gordon, Fifty Years of the*

*House of Lords*, *A Home Rule Catechism* and others on special political questions. From the point of sale the most successful was that entitled *The Langworthy Marriage*, now almost forgotten. Under Cook's own editorship the most important were Mr. Garrett's *Letters from South Africa* and *The Fall of Mr. Parnell*. Mention must also be made of the *Pall Mall Budget*, which under the editorship of Mr. Charles Morley, the statesman's nephew, became a popular illustrated weekly and reproduced itself afterwards in the *Westminster Budget*.

The *Pall Mall* was, indeed, a very live and prolific institution. Cook's mind was fertile in suggestion of new features. These were the great days of literary appreciation. Culture was in the air. The whole of English literature was being illustrated and annotated and made available to the many by cheap edition and reprint. For example, that admirable series of monographs entitled The English Men of Letters Series was appearing under Mr. John Morley's editorship. There was movement in every department of life and thought. The new doctrine of organic evolution was fighting for recognition and capturing many a religious and philosophic stronghold. Controversial combats were fought out between opposites of such calibre as Gladstone and Huxley, Swinburne and Matthew Arnold. Meantime the whole face of politics was being charged by the strong emergence of a new sense of Empire citizenship, the result of many converging influences, but chiefly of the great mechanical inventions and the bridging of space and time whose effects were now beginning to be felt in the political field. Henceforth Burke's *Opposuit Natura*, "a great flood stops me", the physical argument against closer union between England and her daughters over the seas, was to have an ever-diminishing force.

The problems of the day were big and generous. And the race of the Lapithae was not yet extinct. Gladstone, the greatest among many great, still strode "at a swinging pace", as Cook records having seen him one November morning in 1888, through the London streets.

The days of Queen Victoria had indeed become spacious, and Cook was well qualified to see that the spirit of the age was reflected in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. In 1886 he organized the famous symposium on the Best Hundred Books. Those recommended by Sir John Lubbock "as necessary for a liberal education" soon became the canonical list. Eminent persons in every walk of life were invited to send suggestions or competing lists, one of the results being a boxful of some eighty letters carefully preserved by Sir Edward Cook, and forming perhaps one of the most comprehensive treasuries of shining autographs now in existence. The reader may perhaps like to glance at a few of these replies. The Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Coleridge, found time to write from Judges' Lodgings, Carmarthen :

*January 22, 1886.*

SIR—It is impossible for me in the time now at my disposal to attempt an answer to your very interesting letter. Indeed if I had abundance of time my reading has been so desultory and superficial ever since I left the University, its course has been so much guided by wayward and passing fancies that I should be sorry to suggest to any one else the books which happen to have delighted me. Generally speaking, I think Sir John Lubbock's list a very good one, as far as I know the books which compose it. But I know nothing of Chinese and Sanscrit, and have no opinion whatever of the Chinese and Sanscrit works he refers to. To the Classics I should add Catullus, Propertius and Ovid (in selections), Pindar and the pastoral writers, Theocritus, Bion and Moschus.

I should find a place among epic poets for Tasso, Ariosto and I should suppose Camoens, though I know him only in translation.

With the *poems* of Malory on the Morte d'Arthur I am quite unacquainted ; Malory's *prose* romance under that title is familiar to many readers from Southey's reprint of (I think) Caxton's edition of it.

Among the Greek Dramatists I should give a more prominent place to Euripides, the friend of Socrates, the idol of Menander, the admiration of Milton and Charles Fox, and I should exclude Aristophanes, whose splendid genius does not seem to me to atone for the baseness and vulgarity of his mind.

In History I should exclude Hume as mere waste of time now to read, and include Tacitus and Lord Clarendon and Sismondi.

I do not know enough about Philosophy to offer any opinion.

In Poetry and General Literature I should certainly include Dryden and some plays of Ben Jonson and Ford and Massinger and Shirley and Webster ; Gray, Collins, Coleridge, Charles Lamb, De Quincey, Bolingbroke, Sterne ; I should substitute Bryant for Longfellow, and most certainly I should add Cowper.

In Fiction I should add Miss Austen, *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones*, *Humphry Clinker*, and certainly include Kingsley.

But I am writing away from all books and with no time for reflection, and though courtesy leads me to reply to a very courteous letter I have no wish that a hasty and imperfect note such as this should be taken as representing a considered and deliberate opinion.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

COLERIDGE.

Sir Henry Irving's list was brief and portable :

LYCEUM THEATRE,  
January 13, 1886.

In reply to your courteous request, I should say : Before a hundred books commend me first to the study of two—the Bible and Shakespeare.

General Wolseley records that during the Indian Mutiny and China War he carried with him a Testament and two volumes of Shakespeare containing the best plays, and since then had always carried a Book of Common Prayer, Thomas à Kempis and the *Soldiers'*

*Pocket Book.* The book he liked reading at odd moments was the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*; and if going on any distant expedition he would add to all these—in history, Creasy's *Decisive Battles*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Caesar, Voltaire's *Charles XII.*, *Caesar* by Froude, Hume's *England*, and in fiction, he wickedly adds, Macaulay's *History of England* and his *Essays*.

Mr. Jowett of Balliol thought Lubbock's a good list, its chief fault being that it was too long. Mr. Henry James's letter was more original, and ran thus :

3 BOLTON STREET, W.,  
January 21.

I must beg you to excuse me from sending you, as you do me the honour to propose, a list of the hundred best books. I have but few convictions on this subject, and they may indeed be resolved into a single one, which, however, may not decently be reproduced in the columns of a newspaper, which for reasons apart from its intrinsic value (be that great or small) I do not desire to see made public. It is simply that the reading of the newspapers is *the* pernicious habit and the father of all idleness and levity.

This is not, however, an opinion that I should have ventured to thrust upon you, without the pretext that you have been so rash as to offer to, etc.

Mr. James, to "his great alarm and surprise", received a proof of this letter the following day, and had to appeal to the editor's "fine sense of honour" not to let it appear. *Oderint dum metuant* might well have been the editor's reflection.

Cook always kept going by the side of his professional labour some literary work of his own. During these busy days his leisure time was absorbed in preparing his *Guide to the National Gallery*, and in the cultivation of his Ruskin enthusiasms. Stead has recorded how Ruskin wrote to him during his editorship of the *Pall*

*Mall*, saying, "You have a man on your staff who knows more about my works than I do myself". That was scarcely an exaggeration. We have seen how Cook's Ruskinian proclivities began as early as his Winchester days, and they had been fostered ever since. Ruskin was no admirer of British journalism. He had gone so far as to describe the newspaper press as "so many square leagues of dirtily-printed falsehood." Yet he was destined to find in a British journalist by far his ablest exponent, a more wholly efficient editor and interpreter, perhaps, than has ever fallen to the lot of any great master in philosophy or literature.

Ruskin was still living but suffering from those successive mental failures which darkened and afflicted his later years. Cook's first interview with the Master was due to some excellent summaries which he did at Stead's request of the famous Lectures in Oxford. These reports Cook afterwards embodied in his *Studies of Ruskin*, published at Orpington in 1890. Ruskin was struck with their ability and asked to be introduced. The Ruskin interviews form the earliest entries in the Diary which he now began and continued, with varying fulness and regularity, to within a few weeks of his death.

October 28, 1887.—Spielmann came to tell me yesterday afternoon that Ruskin was staying at Morley's Hotel, having come up from Folkestone to see the doctors for rupture. So this morning I went, sent up card and a note and was at once shown to his little bedroom on the second floor with a biggish window overlooking the square. He was dressed in his usual style—blue frockcoat over brown homespun, double-breasted waistcoat, with the untidy cuffs (of "Hortus"), and slippers. He rose to receive me—"I am so glad to see you"—and asked to be allowed to take the invalid chair. He had been writing at a little table before the fire to Mrs. Arthur Severn,<sup>1</sup> and had a volume of the

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<sup>1</sup> Joan Ruskin Agnew, John Ruskin's cousin and ward, who had married Arthur Severn, R.L., son of Joseph Severn, the friend of Keats the poet.

*Magazine of Art* open before him. I asked him if he was better for the sea-air. "I hardly know", he said; "I was much better, but the sea-air acted like champagne".

Then I said we ("P.M.G.") had had some old letters of his offered us by Mr. Stronach. Had he any objection to our publishing them? "Not the least. All the world may read any letters I ever wrote". They covered all sorts of subjects, I said, from the "Romish Church" to "In Praise of Bottled Stout". "Well, I quite stick to that; I have been taking too much of it lately".

Then I asked him about the National Gallery, recapitulating his own permission, and asking if he would write a preface for me (that is, for the *Guide*). Certainly he would. He had been to the Gallery lately. "And it is now a beautiful collection—the new rooms and the hanging—quite a beautiful piece of work. I don't like Raphael, but certainly it is lovely, quite the loveliest Raphael in the world—the San Sisto is dark and brown beside it, and then the St. Catherine comes in so beautifully beside it. More than ever have I been impressed with the exhaustless beauty and industry of the Italian pictures. Botticelli's circles of Angels is most lovely—and what an amount of work in it! With most painters you see at once the pains they were at, but here it is not obvious. I was in a very humble mood when I went and found myself actually admiring Canaletto". "That must have been because you have not lately been to Venice". "Yes, so it must, but it was his good workmanship I admired. After all he was a good oil painter, and I was so disgusted and saddened to think how all Turner's work has gone to rack and ruin, and even Sir Joshua's too. The 'Three Graces' is quite melancholy now". I told him about the Holy Family which had gone so much that it had to be removed downstairs. "It is very curious how it must have gone all at once; that the five angels are still quite perfect. The contrast between the Italians and the littleness and bad workmanship of the English struck me more than ever. It is exactly contrary to what we imagine the national characters to be. Certainly you shall have your preface, but you must let me see your book so that I may know what line to take.

"And now let me in return ask you something about the *Pall Mall Gazette*. You are the only paper with a conscience, I always say. But why do you disfigure your paper with such

ugly things. There was a horrid thing about being buried alive not long ago : it could do no good, and it made me wretched for a month. And I do wish, as I wrote to you, that you would sometimes find out things to praise. I am quite out of the world now, all my beautiful places are destroyed, and I am preparing, as you see, to live in a single bedroom. But there are so many noble works going on. Why can't you praise. . . ." He went on to complain of the vulgarizing of the "P.M.G." by our illustrations, which I could only defend by saying they were so often the best way of giving a piece of news, and that in the *Budget* printed on the flat they were not always so vile. He complained of the disgraceful state of the streets. Any one coming up, as he did, from the country could not fail to be struck with the number of loose women and men and the indecent photographs. A street like Regent Street should not be like that. "The terrible ugliness of London is very painful".

I asked him if he was going on with *Praeterita*. "Well, I don't know", he said. "I had meant in the third volume to make it domestic and to touch on various matters of sentiment in my life, but the present generation is too coarse to understand it. Then I decided to make it more a record of my artistic life. But now I don't know. I do not get crazy and see visions now. I almost wish I did. They were mostly visions of hell, it is true, but sometimes visions of heaven, and one was almost recompensed. But now my illness takes the form of intense dejection, and looking back becomes painful. Yet there are some things which I am anxious to say about myself, which if I do not say no one else will say for me—especially why I changed from artistic to political writing. For though I dislike my work more than most authors, yet I am convinced that the teaching of *Unto this Last* and *Munera Pulveris* is entirely true, and the world will come to discover yet that they cannot live on gunpowder and iron, but only on corn ; and that the only way to deal with this sort of thing (looking out at the unemployed in the square) is not by mere giving, not by charity at so much per cent ransom, but by personal service".

I told him how many signs there were of people beginning to see this, but though they accepted his teaching they abused him. "Ah, I am glad to hear you say that. I've thought no one cared even to abuse me now. The *Pall Mall* sticks to me, I say to my



friends, but even they will drop me soon". Then he went on to say how touched he had been by hearing of three workmen in the (real) wild West who had written to ask after him.

I asked him if he had heard of the University Settlements in East London. "Yes, they are very beautiful efforts, but they go dead against all my teaching. It is useless to work in big cities. Go back to the country; save what there is still to be saved there. All that work in London is like working at the bottom of a coal mine". I said something about the saving remnant, even in London. "Don't think I despise the lowest orders of London—God knows I know of their virtues". I told him that we were applying Ruskin in the "P.M.G." "But you don't apply Carlyle's and my Toryism, I am afraid".

He talked a good deal about theatres—had been to see Thorne ("I always go to see him") in *Sophia*, but Thorne hadn't a good enough part. Maud Millett was good, and there was some lovely dancing. "Most of it nowadays is not art but mere posturing, especially in pantomines. I shall never see another pantomime now that Payne has gone. Why don't they in plays and novels give us more of when it all comes right again? There was wretchedly little of that in *Sophia*: they hurry over it as if they didn't care for it. The first thing I did at Folkestone was to go to Sanger's Circus, but there wasn't half enough clown. And the elephants were shown off too much: the real charm in an elephant is to watch his native sagacity. And the chariot race was terrible—the vulgarization of the noblest thing, I suppose, in Greece.

"And how is your principal, Mr. Stead?" I said he had been overworked and away recruiting. "Then you have been virtually editor lately. Well, I have enjoyed your visit. Good-bye, it was kind of you to come to my sick-room. Good-bye."

He has lost some more teeth, Cook is careful to observe, and looks physically weaker than when I saw him last, and far more melancholy. Very bright in conversation, but in momentary pauses a weary look in his eyes.

December 9, 1887.—Found a letter from Ruskin to the "P.M.G." from Morley's Hotel. Called at 5 and was with him for a little over an hour. He was in a comfortable sitting-room this time, and said as I came in that he was never more glad to

see any one in his life. We sat down and he damned the "P.M.G." for not having inserted his two former letters from Sandgate. He was damned if he was going to write to us any more on those terms. I said we didn't know that he meant them for publication. He replied that he had written the first one with extreme care and had sent his man up to London specially to deliver it. It was quite a monstrous thing interfering with the Trafalgar Square meetings.<sup>1</sup> When he was up here last he had gone about the Square and talked to some of the Black Flag people—very nice fellows they were, and quite right, too, in demanding bread. He was all for stealing, as he had said once in a former letter to the "P.M.G."—for Orlando's style of stealing as shown in the grand passage in *As You Like It*,<sup>2</sup> which he recited to me and begged me to quote.

Then he went on to abuse the "P.M.G."—after saying he couldn't understand our not using those two letters, and had supposed the paper was under different management—for its horrible things: putting in all sorts of abominations which ought to be kept for hospital rooms or criminal records—quite loathsome it was becoming.

April 19, 1888.—Went to see J. R. at his suggestion, at Morley's Hotel (5–6 P.M.). Found him in the old poky little bedroom—"Only to see you, so I've no sitting-room this time—and will the preface really do?" . . . I was to alter it as I liked. Then he said complimentary things about the *Guide*—it was the best ever done and would be seen to be so, not for this Gallery alone, but for all Galleries. But I was to cut out as much of him as I liked, for there was decidedly too much.

Then he went on telling me about himself. "I have been going on in this egotistic way", he said, "because you sometimes say things about me, and I should like you to know just how things are. I have been having a very bad time indeed—deep depression, etc., but I am cheerful again now. All my illnesses have been the result, so far as I can see, either of vexation and anger or of eating things that did not agree with me. Mrs.

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<sup>1</sup> The right of public meeting question was at this time acute. It had come up a month previously in connection with the meetings of the Unemployed. The "P.M.G.", alone of the London papers, took the side of the demonstrators, Cook being responsible for that policy in Stead's absence.

<sup>2</sup> Act II. Scene 7.

Severn and I love one another as much as ever, but we are constantly falling out and then eating our hearts out with grief for doing so—oh, it's been a very poignant business. Then Arthur Severn is a good fellow enough, but utterly out of sympathy with me. And the villagers at Coniston, very naturally, go with the Severns. The result is that I have made over Brantwood to them by a deed of gift, for fear of the place being broken up. And have to find a new home, which isn't easy at seventy." [Ruskin then intimates his intention of going to Switzerland, first to Sallanches, "where there is the best view of the Alps".] "I still find great great pleasure in my old studies of trees, stones, etc.—want to resume my old geologizing there, if I find I can walk". . . . I asked him about the Rhone description which Waldstein read at his Royal Institute Lecture—"Was that written lately?" "Yes, and I feel I can write as well as ever I could, now". Then he told me about the poems, including some rhyming letters to his father, which he was going to bring out.

He said he hadn't read the Turner part of my catalogue. For the last part of Turner's life no excuse could be made; and if he had read it, he would have been obliged to cut out all his praises, for it was too sad the way all Turner's best work had gone, *e.g.* the horses in the Ulysses—their heads, which were once exquisitely beautiful, now invisible. It was blind madness. "When I am crazy and think I am being buried or damned I know that I'm crazy; but Turner never saw the madness of his passion for light which made him fling the chalk-white on by palette-fuls".

He was more than ever impressed with the misery of London—harlots with red veils now in the Strand, double-painted—not a face of repose or contentment. And at Folkestone not much better—the old Town gone, the poor living in misery (gave an amusing account of his visit to an old boatman—all the neighbours "suspected" him, and he had to tip 2s. 6d. to find out the man's house, a wretched room), the rich in a quarter apart. But good stuff still: his outing with three girls, whom he set to play with the lambs.

A year later Mr. and Mrs. Cook were visiting Mr. Albert Fleming at Ambleside and were driven over to Brantwood where they were able to see only Mrs. Severn,

as Ruskin was afflicted with one of his recurring attacks. Cook has left no record of any further personal interviews with the great writer whose life-work he was to enshrine in a magnificent edition, the product of ten long years of unsparing industry.

Cook's *Popular Handbook to the National Gallery* was published in September 1888. For several years he had edited the catalogue of the annual exhibition organized by Mr. (afterwards Canon) Barnett at St. Jude's, White-chapel, and from this sprang the suggestion for the more ambitious work. Cook's Handbook was something very different from a dry official catalogue. It was a perfect treasury of historic reference, poetic excerpt and artistic appreciation. Not only was the author widely and deeply read, but he knew books by the same sort of special sense as some people know horses. He was acquainted with every track and by-path of Bookland and could usually walk without much hesitation to any passage he required. His Handbook was a marvel not only of knowledge but of the marshalling and mobilization of knowledge. It not only served its immediate purpose but was a genuine book to be taken up at pleasure and read with unfailing profit and delight. "So far as I know", wrote Ruskin in the preface, "there has never yet been compiled for the illustration of any collection of paintings whatever a series of notes at once so copious, carefully chosen and usefully arranged as this which has been prepared by the industry and good sense of Mr. Edward T. Cook, to be our companion through the magnificent rooms of our own National Gallery". "As a collection of critical remarks by esteemed judges and of clearly formed opinions by earnest lovers of art, the little book possesses a metaphysical interest quite as great as its historical one". Ruskin had given Cook permission to use his writings to any extent for illustration and

• criticism, so that the Handbook supplies incidentally a fairly complete conspectus of the Master's own art teaching. It is not surprising that the first edition of 1500 copies was quickly sold and that Cook in two months' time was preparing a second. The *Popular Handbook of the Tate Gallery*, published ten years later, reproduced all the excellences of the earlier work.

## CHAPTER V

### POLITICS IN THE EIGHTIES

A man's nature is best perceived in privateness, for there is no affectation.—BACON.

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* played a decisive and consistent part during the Home Rule agitations of 1886. The paper had been for Home Rule even before Chamberlain and claimed to have "pioneered" Mr. Gladstone into that policy. But the *Pall Mall* approached the question from an Imperial point of view. Home Rule for Ireland was to be a step in advance towards an ultimate Federation of the Empire. The Gladstonian Bill of 1886 was different in conception. By excluding Irish members from the Imperial Parliament it practically threw Ireland out of the Empire, broke up the unity of the three kingdoms and became a measure of disruption rather than of consolidation. Mr. Gladstone never lived into a really sympathetic understanding of the new Empire or Commonwealth sentiments and was not able to appreciate the full strength of this opposition to his measure. But the *Pall Mall* left nobody in any doubt as to its opinion. When the Bill was introduced in April 1886, it wrote :

From the very first we have opposed the ejection of the Irish members from the House of Commons as involving a disruption of the organic unity of the three kingdoms for which the British public was not prepared. We still take our stand on that point

as essential. If Mr. Gladstone makes their exclusion a vital portion of his scheme we shall have no option but to oppose it. . . . The retention of the Irish representatives as fully qualified members of the Imperial legislature is an essential condition of the provisional interregnum that must prevail until the evolution of an Imperial Senate composed of delegations from the Home Rule Parliaments of the three kingdoms and the colonies is complete.

Again two days later :

The exclusion of the Irish members from Westminster is not only serious ; it is vital. It makes all the difference between the disruption and the maintenance of the unity of the Empire. As long as that is a central and vital feature of the Bill we have no option but to offer it the strenuous opposition with which we would confront any other attempt to dismember or curtail our Imperial heritage.

Was it argued that Ireland without representation at Westminster would simply be in the position of an oversea self-governing colony, the *Pall Mall* had its answer ready and irrefutable :

The colonial constitutions were avowedly framed to prepare them for separation. That the colonies in spite of this unnatural treatment have clung to the mother country is due to causes which do not exist in Ireland. The colonists were intensely loyal and their loyalty was sustained by the material consideration of Imperial protection extended gratis. The Irish are by no means loyal and the new scheme puts an annual premium of £3,600,000 on separation. Is there any colony, no matter how loyal it may be, which would be content to contribute 40 per cent of its gross revenue to the Imperial Exchequer and at the same time have no voice in the control of Imperial policy ? How then can we expect such a miracle in Ireland ?

It was no doubt largely due to this steady pressure from the *Pall Mall*, by this time one of the most influential Liberal organs in the country, that Mr. Gladstone found himself compelled to compromise on this

point. The Irish members were to be excluded except—and the exception was wider than the rule—when questions of taxation or Imperial policy were under discussion. Whether in practice such a system could have been worked may be doubted, but the concession satisfied the *Pall Mall* so far as the second reading was concerned. On the eve of the fatal division in the House (June 7) the journal spoke a last word to the Liberal members :

The fundamental error of the Home Rule Bill was the exclusion of the Irish members from the House of Commons. This made all the difference between a Home Rule Bill that binds the Empire together and a Home Rule Bill that is the thin end of the wedge that splits it asunder. . . . Had Ministers stuck to their guns and insisted on pressing it forward hotfoot as it stood, we should never have hesitated for a moment about giving it the *coup de grâce* on the second reading, although in so doing we destroyed the Ministry, split the party and precipitated an appeal to the country, which would inevitably have resulted in the return of a Cabinet of coercion. But Ministers recognized their blunder. The Irish members are to have an indefeasible right to sit in the House of Commons whenever Imperial questions and questions of taxation are under discussion—that is to say, practically that they are never to be excluded at all—the Bill is to be withdrawn in order to be recast in accordance with this fundamental and organic change, and Mr. Gladstone will to-night assure the House that the vote on the second reading of the Bill will simply and solely be a vote for the abstract principle of Home Rule. Under these circumstances the duty of every member who accepts the principle of Home Rule is plain and unmistakable. He must vote for the second reading, secure the principle of Home Rule and then direct all his energies in the next few months to render it impossible for the Ministry to propose again the wrong kind of Home Rule.

But the Bill was past salvation. The second reading was negatived by a majority of 30, and the Liberal party started those wanderings in the wilderness which,



with one brief return, were to last for a full twenty years.

Cook has left us notes of a large number of conversations he had with political leaders during the eventful and confusing years 1885 to 1887. Between June 1885 and July 1886 there were four changes of Government and two General Elections, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury alternating with one another like the in-and-out figures in an old weather-box. During the spring of 1885 Mr. Gladstone's Administration was labouring heavily. The Liberal party was divided on such questions as the Soudan and Irish Coercion and credited with the intention of running the vessel deliberately on to any convenient rock. It was in June that the opportunity or the disaster came. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach moved an amendment to the Budget, condemning certain financial proposals, which was carried against the Government by 264 to 252 votes. From this division there were 76 Liberal absentees, which fortified the suspicions that the Government had actually courted defeat. Mr. Gladstone resigned and long negotiations ensued before Lord Salisbury finally took his place. Dissolution, it should be mentioned, was impossible because great changes were to be wrought in the constituencies by the Redistribution Bill then before Parliament. Lord Salisbury had difficulty in obtaining from Mr. Gladstone the specific assurances of support he required before taking office with a majority in the House of Commons against him. In the end, largely, it would seem, through the influence of the Queen, Salisbury undertook the Government.

Lord Randolph Churchill, the leader of the Tory Democrat group, was very popular in the country and a necessary member of the new Government. But he steadily refused to join so long as Sir Stafford Northcote,

who, in his opinion, "had been playing hell with the Conservative party for the last five years", continued to lead in the House of Commons. Lord Randolph, in an interview he gave to Cook on May 21, 1885, said :

"I am inclined to think that there is a good deal in the general rumour this morning that the Government will not hang together long after Whitsuntide. Gladstone is undoubtedly much worn. His reply to me on Monday was absolutely wandering and incoherent. And no wonder, said an intimate friend of his to me, considering that he spends three hours every night with skittles. It's funny, but so it is. And a few days ago I had a very confidential communication from a quarter which I am not at liberty to mention, but to which I attach great weight, assuring me that the Government would be out by Whitsuntide. However, I'm not at all anxious for it and shall not go out of my way to bring it about. I would much rather wait for the General Election ; for there would be great difficulties now in framing any Tory Government that would have any chance of getting on. After the General Election, however we fare, we shall at any rate be a better party and more compact. The shelving of Northcote is one difficulty now. We shall have to be very careful how we do it, for he has a great many friends on both sides. Personally I should not see any great objection to leaving him nominal leader in the Commons."

"With you at his side to run pins into him ? "

"Well, you know I have always found him very reasonable when left to me. We've never had much difficulty in screwing him up to the striking point. But he's an undecided man by nature, and then other people get at him, and by the time we leave him all his go has gone out of him again. But after the General Election the difficulty may solve itself ; for he has a very stiff contest before him, and I'm told it's very likely indeed he won't get in. The truth is he hasn't the physique any longer for a hard election. But whether we make him a peer, or whatever the form is, there won't be any difficulty I feel sure in disposing of him ".

"If you *are* compelled to come in this Parliament, what will your party do ? "

"As for the party I can't say. I merely give you my opinions.

You must estimate what they are worth and what influence they would have on the party. As to Ireland you saw what I said last night (at the St. Stephen's Club). I certainly would not join any Conservative Cabinet which brought in a new Coercion Bill in this Parliament : in a new Parliament the question would have to be considered afresh."

"And if the Irish are not content with 'no coercion', what more will you give them?"

"Well, it would be no good trying local government; you Liberals could always outbid us there; but we are not tied at all as to land purchase. Large public expenditure for Irish purposes—that, I am afraid, is the Tory policy in Ireland."

"And as to Egypt it's now annex or internationalize. That's Bismarck's alternative, and France won't allow the former. What will *you* do?"

"Not annex perhaps, but protect certainly. Withdraw from the Soudan—any one may have the damned railway who likes—hold Suakin I suppose, hold the Wady Halfa line and protect Egypt".

"Then you will have to square Germany".

"Yes, we'll give Bismarck anything he likes in S. Africa. He might have the whole place, bar the Cape, so far as I care—but Zanzibar certainly. I was talking to Salisbury about this only the other day and he agreed. A year ago if we had come in, we might have got better terms."

"And as to Russia?"

"We should carry on the negotiations certainly, and the chances of war would, I believe, be less. How can you expect the Russians not to go on making fresh demands every day now, when they've only got to ask and have".

"And the Budget?"

"We should raise the whole on loan and leave the new electorate to decide what form the new taxation should take".

"At the next election——"

"Well, I agree with the 'P.M.G.' that our prospects are not so bad as people think; we shall at least hold our own".

On June 9 Cook had another talk with Lord Randolph:

"So you've done the trick at last?"

"Yes, we've run the fox to ground. It began to be known

at dinner time what was going to happen. Henry Fowler told me we were going to win, and Winn and I made out that we should have a majority of one [actually 252-264]. The absentees were so many [76 Liberals] that I really believe the whole thing was a plant. Chamberlain was delighted. I've tried every form of excitement in my time from tip-cat to tiger-shooting, but there's nothing like an exciting division in the House. I'm quite hoarse this morning from my last night's shouting. Fancy poor old Gladstone having to take that horrid long journey to Balmoral, knowing well all the time how delighted the Queen will be at his errand : it will be the happiest moment in her life.

"Decidedly we oughtn't to take office. We've got them and we'll kick 'em. They must remodel their Budget to suit us. How they're to do it, though, I'm sure I can't say. They won't tax tea or sugar. I suppose they would have to leave it all over and raise a loan, and that would be quite reasonable. If it had been a vote of censure, a case where we were clearly called on to come in, things would have been different".

"We're delighted to hear that you don't want to come in, for Stead believes things are by no means through at St. Petersburg yet".

"Well, I was assured yesterday by a very good authority (I'm not at liberty to mention his name) that things were completely settled ; he was congratulating me on our victory having come after that."

"Did you see many people in Paris : Clemenceau, *e.g.* ?"

"No, I don't know him. I knew Gambetta very well, but I don't know any of the political people now. However, I saw the Rothschilds and Rivers Wilson and a lot of other people, and they all told me exactly the same thing—*nous ne sommes pas libres* : it's impossible to imagine how much under Bismarck's thumb they are. 'If B. ordered a monarchy', one of them said, 'to-morrow it would be done'".

"Then there's nothing to be feared from France and it's more than ever a matter of squaring Bismarck ?"

"Yes, the French have no army worth anything ; that's the reason of it. So Galliffet told me ; there's no discipline in it".

Cook continues :

From Randolph I went to Arthur Balfour and philosophic

doubt—had seen no one, in fact was only just up—strong feeling amongst our fellows in favour of going in—for himself didn't profess to have weighed the matter properly, but was inclined to be against going in—would always be glad to be of any help he could to Stead—hoped he would come and have a talk soon.

The issue between the “old gang” and the young bloods of the Fourth Party was clinched by an incident in the House of Commons on Monday, June 15, 1885. It had been agreed between Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone that the House should adjourn until Friday, but should consider at once, before adjourning, the Lords' amendments to the Redistribution Bill. Sir Stafford Northcote, the official leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, of course supported this procedure. But he was opposed by the Fourth Party. The adjournment of the debate was moved by Sir Henry Wolff, on the ostensible ground that such questions as were involved in the Lords' amendments could not be discussed in the absence of a responsible Government. Thirty-five of that group, with Sir Henry and Mr. Gorst as tellers, went into the lobby against their official chief. “This”, as Mr. Winston Churchill writes, “was the end”.<sup>1</sup> It was formally announced two days later that Sir Stafford Northcote would retire to the House of Lords and that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach would lead in the House of Commons. The next day (June 16) Cook saw Lord Randolph Churchill in a dressing-room in the basement of the Carlton Club :

“What would he tell us of last night's business ? ”

“I can't tell you much and what I do say must be in the strictest confidence ; you mustn't commit me in any way ”.

“Certainly not : only last time you put me on the wrong scent ”.

“No, my dear sir, I tell you it's been the toss of a penny all

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<sup>1</sup> See for this incident the account in his *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, vol. i. pp. 416-18.

the time. Some sort of Conservative Government ever since Lord S. went to Balmoral, for he has the most exaggerated notions, like Lord Beaconsfield, of loyalty to the Queen ; and of course any one could form a Conservative Government to carry on just the necessary business—the waiters at this Club would do for that. But up to last night the chances were 100 to 1 against a Conservative Government that would command your support or any support in the country, or have any chance of making a good show when the elections came. This morning the chances are in favour of it ”.

“ Last night, I take it, was a demonstration in force in favour of that : only there were two possible solutions—a Cabinet with half of you left out, or with all of you in ”.

“ Exactly so ; that is just what was at issue, and very curiously at issue, up to last night ”.

“ And how do you like *our* nomination of you to Ireland ? ”<sup>1</sup>

“ I can’t say anything about that ” (but he seemed to like it, though) : “ indeed I’ve gone further than I meant already. However, I shall always be glad to give you hints as to facts, so long as you don’t commit me ”.

He had been at Salisbury’s for an hour before this.

On June 18 Cook records very vividly a talk he had with Mr. W. H. Smith, about to become Secretary of State for War in the new Cabinet. The Minister began :

“ Mr. Stead tells me I may speak to you in perfect confidence. Let me tell you then that if the Government goes on (and I have no information about that) I go to the War Office with six months’ very heavy work indeed before me. If I had only consulted my own inclination I should certainly have cut the whole concern. I am sick of public life and very nearly despair of it. But great pressure was brought to bear on me ; and as you and Mr. Stead will, I know, put party feeling away for the moment, you will believe me that, like others, I desire to serve our country. And I believe that I can do good at the War Office. Certainly I should have preferred to go back to the Admiralty ; and no doubt I might have insisted on it, but there are some things which one can do but should not do. Lord G. Hamilton is quite the most

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Randolph became Secretary of State for India.

promising of the younger men, and he will come to the work with a perfectly open and unprejudiced mind ”.

“ But unfortunately by the time he’s learnt the work, he may be out again ”.

“ Well, he will have all the help I can give him. In fact (but you mustn’t make mischief out of this) he will be under my tutelage. And, after all, the greatest efficiency of the Navy is guns, and that comes under my department ”.

“ And why did they want you so much to go to the War Office ? ”

“ Because (here again this is all, remember, in the strictest confidence) they thought I should be able to take decisions when they were wanted, to say ‘ Yes ’ or ‘ No ’. You see I have no royal connections, no family interests. I haven’t a single male relative alive except my own boy. I am completely unprejudiced and unfettered. Now no mischief must be made, or—— but I needn’t threaten ”.

“ No, if Mr. Stead ever makes any improper use of information you give us, why, of course, there will be an end of it ”.

“ Yes, exactly so—an end that minute ”.

Wherewith W. H. S. shook hands and returned to his desk as though he had on his shoulders the cares of a hundred War Offices and Admiralties.

On the same day Cook saw Lord Randolph again with regard to certain articles which had appeared in the *Pall Mall* on the Russian question. The danger of war with Russia had by that time almost disappeared owing to the previous agreement of May 4. But the Russo-Afghan frontier had still to be delimited, and the new Government took on the game from its predecessors at a rather difficult “ bunker ”, namely, the Zulficar Pass. Lord Randolph had earlier in the year taken a strong anti-Russian line and had resented the agreement of May 4 as a surrender under the disguise of arbitration. Cook thus records the interview of June 18 :

“ Well, these are nice articles you’ve been writing in the ‘ P.M.G.’ ”

"I'm glad you've seen the articles : that was what Mr. Stead wanted me to come for, to call your attention to them".

"Seen them? Good God, I should think I had seen them".

"And they really meant what they said—Mr. Stead wanted you to know—and were written with authority".

"Oh, you're not going to frighten me, you know. You may go and put all those ideas into Russia's head if you like, but she will have no reason as far as we are concerned for any offence. Of course if she wants war she can have it. But I don't believe she does. She will snarl, no doubt, but not fight. We shall take up the negotiations where they are and make the best of it. You should remember too that the negotiations are not carried on by the Indian Secretary, but by the Foreign Secretary. The Indian Secretary only has to do with Indian home affairs".

I told him Stead thought of publishing all his anti-Russian speeches.

"Quite a fair move : I've no objection".

"And will you recant?"

"Recant, good heavens, no! not even if Salisbury asked me to. I only spoke of the Khiva business and said what hundreds said and what is quite true too. And as to recanting, one of the shrewdest diplomats in London was saying to me only the other day it was not Gladstone's insult to Austria that damaged him so much in Europe, but his apology".

Then I began asking him about the new Cabinet—was he satisfied?

"Pretty well; one can't have one's own way in everything, of course. There are more of the old lot than I should have liked". But here Lord R. Cecil came in with a note from Salisbury and I departed.

Mr. Reginald Brett, who afterwards became Viscount Esher, informed Mr. Stead that Lord Randolph Churchill had told Lord Salisbury he must take office, assurances or no assurances. There was probably some truth in this story. The shelving of Sir Stafford Northcote may well have led Lord Randolph to change his view on the subject, and he seems now to have been in favour of Lord Salisbury assuming office without negotiations



with Gladstone, who was a past master at that sort of thing and would be sure to get the better of Salisbury. "If I had to tackle him", said Lord Randolph, "I shouldn't be so afraid. When he smiles he's dangerous; he's all right when he's angry".

On this news coming to Stead Cook called on Mr. Balfour to find out if it was true. "Not a word of truth in it", said the new President of the Local Government Board. "You mustn't say so, but it was all the Queen. Salisbury had practically no choice. The assurances have been amplified, but I confess I should have wanted better ones".

During 1885 and 1886 Greece was much to the fore in international politics. The junction of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria had taken place in September of the former year. This union affected many Greeks, and Greece thought the opportunity favourable for the assertion against Turkey of claims in Macedonia which were in themselves perfectly just. The Powers, however, at Lord Salisbury's instigation, interfered to prevent Greece going to war and probably rushing on her own destruction. Lord Rosebery enforced this policy in the following May (1886) by blockading the Greek ports. A record made by Cook under date January 26, 1886, the day before the fall of the short-lived Salisbury Government, refers to these events. Mr. Brett was indefatigable then and always in keeping his friend abreast of the latest information:

On Saturday, January 23, I got a letter from Brett saying: "Leave Ireland and H.R. alone and write on Greece, if you take my view: if you don't I rely on you to say nothing about it. Servia will not attack Turkey without Greece. If she does Bizzy<sup>1</sup> thinks whole Eastern Question will be reopened in a very disastrous way. He proposes that three Northern Powers should

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<sup>1</sup> Prince Bismarck.

force Greece to disarm. She is behaving very badly, relying on Powers not to let her be beaten too badly. If she fights, Russia and Austria will be drawn in—there's the danger". I wrote leader accordingly. Brett was on the spot, for to-day it appears that on January 23 Salisbury telegraphed to our Minister at Athens as follows: "Inform the Premier of Greece that war with Turkey being unjustifiable and threatening the interests of other nations, England has already received the consent of most of the Great Powers, especially Germany, to prevent by her fleets all action on the part of Greece by sea".

This morning all the London papers, barring *Daily News*, take my line. Brett writes: "Of course no one can help feeling some sympathy with Greece even in her mistake. But the 'D.N.' appears to think that we ought to allow Greece to run on to her own destruction and entail that of others. If Greece and Servia attack, what happens? Austria absorbs Servia, Russia Bulgaria. And Turkey will undoubtedly defend herself successfully against Greece. What does the 'D.N.' propose then? That we should go to war with Russia or Austria or both?"

Stead wrote to me in morning: "I fear this coercion of Greece. It's too much against the traditions of our party and line of growth. But *si peccas pecca fortiter*, and if you feel inclined to coerce again, suppress my leader, and 'Go it, Ned'". So I went it.

Sent Norman to interview Gennadius.<sup>1</sup> He said he still told his Government that England would never stand coercion of Greece.

January 27, Herbert Gladstone came down to the office with telegram from Mayor of Athens and W. E. G.'s reply: "I earnestly hope that Greece will pause before placing herself on this occasion in conflict with the deliberate and united recommendation of the Powers".

It is not necessary to rehearse the events which led up to Lord Randolph Churchill's self-immolation on the altar of national economy. The following letter addressed to Stead or to Cook at the "P.M.G." has not yet seen daylight:

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek Minister in London.

HATFIELD HOUSE,  
December 24, 1886.

DEAR SIR—I only got your note late last night. I fear I shall not be in town for some days.

The cause of Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation is simply as stated. Rather more than a week ago he informed me that unless the total of the Army and Navy estimates was very considerably below the total of last year, he would not continue to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. After considerable discussion with the departments he resigned his office in a letter I received on Tuesday. I answered his arguments and said that I could not take the responsibility of refusing the Heads of the War Department and the Admiralty the sums which after prolonged consideration they thought necessary for the defence of the country. Least of all could I refuse the funds necessary for defending our ports and coaling stations, which was the point to which Lord Randolph Churchill had taken the most objection. He replied by a letter which I received here after one o'clock on Wednesday night or Thursday morning, in which he confirmed his intention of resigning and mentioned, much in the language used in the communiqué to *The Times*, his dissatisfaction with our legislative intentions. He had not before alluded to this subject to me in connection with his resignation. A few hours later I saw the announcement in *The Times*.

It is not the case that the estimates proposed by the War Office and Admiralty were very large. My only fear on hearing of them was that they were insufficient.

Nothing that I have said here is confidential, but do not say or let it be seen that I have been in communication with you.—Yours very truly,

SALISBURY.

Cook called on Lord Randolph without result. Then came this letter :

December 27, 1886.

MY DEAR SIR—In your letter of to-day's date you say that Mr. Stead "is now in possession of Lord Salisbury's version" of the causes which led to my resignation. I feel sure Mr. Stead must have been misinformed by some ill-disposed person, because

Lord Salisbury has rigorously prohibited me from giving any explanation to the public, stipulating that any such explanations must be reserved for Parliament when it meets. That being so, I feel sure that he would not violate for his own advantage a rule he has imposed on a former colleague.—I am, yours faithfully,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

As a matter of fact Lord Salisbury had stated hardly anything but what had appeared in *The Times* of December 23, clearly from Lord Randolph himself.

A few other Diary notes recall vividly the events of those days :

*January 1, 1887.*—I sent Norman to Goschen to hear whether he had accepted Randolph's place. He brought back written message : " If I accept it will be at urgent wish of Hartington. I should not do so otherwise ".

*January 12.*—Iddesleigh's death. The news came just as I was leaving the office about 4 ; and Stead being away, I stopped till 8 to do the special editions—sending C. Morley and Hill in all directions for news. C. M. found Stead at Carnarvon's and told them the news. " Murdered " was Carnarvon's exclamation.

On January 24 the *Daily News* published a paragraph and leading article saying that the English Cabinet knew war between France and Germany to be a matter of—it was afraid to say how short a time. Cook thereupon sought interviews with Lord Granville and others. Lord Granville said : " I should think there is no one in the Cabinet likely to communicate with the ' D.N.' As to Belgium it is a mistake—though it is not a thing to be said—that we are under obligation to defend it. There was such an obligation, but it was altered by Palmerston. I don't say that it may not be our interest to defend it, but there is no obligation ". Thence to Lord Randolph, who said he didn't believe it a bit—it was no doubt a Stock Exchange *canard*. Cook asked him about Belgium : " I don't care a damn about Belgium.

The only danger to England from a Franco-German war would be if France won and wanted to annex Belgium". . . .

There were many more interviews with Lord Randolph Churchill, between whom and the assistant-editor of the *Pall Mall* a real personal liking seems to have arisen. Space forbids further transcriptions, but one good remark of the Tory Democratic leader may be fished up from oblivion. Lord Randolph was talking of the disadvantage of Salisbury being at once Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. "The P.M.", said Lord Randolph, "ought to be Chancellor of the Exchequer—it is a light office". There were many differences in tradition and character between Lord Randolph Churchill and Edward Cook; but they resembled one another at any rate in this, that they were both prepared at any time to make any sacrifice of place and salary for what they deemed to be right and true.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDITOR OF THE "PALL MALL"

The ideal editor would, I suppose, always be a voice, not an echo ; a source, not a conduit ; the master, not the servant.—E. T. Cook.

STEAD'S absences during these years on his visits to his friends, the Popes and Emperors of Europe, must have been a relief to the *Pall Mall* office, and perhaps not altogether a disadvantage to the paper, as Cook's vicegerencies had always a sedative and moderating effect. But in 1888 one of these occasions resulted in a temporary crisis. Stead was on his first visit to Russia in furtherance of his great idea of Anglo-Russian friendship. He had fought against war with Russia over the Penjdeh incident in 1885, and in his *Truth about Russia* (1888) sought to remove many causes of hostility. Stead was more like a stormy petrel than the symbolical bird of peace, but his pacifism was a genuine emotion and largely explains his violent pro-Boerism during the South African War. His letters to Cook from Russia are as boyish in spirit as in handwriting :

I am having a great time. The British Ambassador gave me a tremendously swell dinner at the Embassy last night—two countesses, a count with breast blazing with stars, and the Austrian ambassador, and then I stayed behind till three o'clock in the morning.

Later he writes :

I have just received the formal notification of my reception by the Emperor on Thursday. I leave St. Petersburg at 9 and

return at 3. In those fateful hours I shall either crown the edifice or come a final cropper. Up to now I have had a brilliant success without a single break. I really begin to believe that when I come back I shall have to go out in my swallow-tail into Society [here follow many notes of exclamation].

Stead was no doubt apt to overestimate the importance of his unofficial interviews with European magnates, most of whom under their trappings seem to have been very ordinary people. He reports to Cook concerning his reception by Tsar Alexander III. :

*May 25, 1888.*—I had a good time with the Emperor yesterday. I have it all written out, but of course it is all a deadly secret, so we cannot publish. I kept him twenty minutes late for lunch, no doubt to the Empress's and children's disgust. But I think he liked me. He thought he would just shake hands and have a few minutes' talk, whereas we had three-quarters of an hour hard political talk. I cannot say anything in the paper about what he said. But this you must know and can act upon with the utmost confidence—that as to the policy of Russia it is exactly that which the "P.M.G." has in season and out of season advocated. The Emperor is profoundly peaceful. There will be peace, he said, for years, and I believe him absolutely. . . . Russia friends with Germany and England friends of both—that is the old "P.M.G." doctrine, and yesterday I had it confirmed absolutely by the Emperor. Russia, Germany and England, said he—if these three hold together we shall have no war.

Stead had dreamed during his absence of the immense impression his Continental articles, sent on in advance, must be making in London. But Cook had exercised an editorial discretion, as Stead discovered to his wrathful indignation on stepping ashore in England. Cook writes in his Diary :

*June 25, 1888.*—Crisis at "P.M.G." begins. Stead back on Saturday. Travelling straight through had seen nothing of the way we dished up his articles till he arrived at Queenborough.

Blackguarded me strongly — disobeyed his express orders — equivalent to dismissing him from editorship — was he editor or not, etc. ? He had written a leader and a statement explaining that the whole would be begun *de novo*. That afternoon I sent him the following letter :

DEAR MR. STEAD—There is one point in what you said this morning about my conduct which if you do not mind I should like cleared up. You left me full discretion, you said, *i.e.* left me as editor in your absence—with one exception, namely, the treatment of your letters from Russia. But Mr. Thompson assured me most positively and categorically that on this very matter he had arranged with you that full discretion was to be retained by the office at home. As a matter of fact, you had left me no instructions whatever ; and I had therefore to gather my position from what Mr. Thompson told me had passed between you and him. In order that there might be no doubt about it I showed Mr. Thompson, before we decided on the matter, your letters to me from St. Petersburg, as well as your endorsement of the copy. He read the letters and said there was nothing in them to override the arrangement he had made with you. I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Thompson, in order that he may confirm my version of what passed. Should he do so, I hope that on reconsideration you will be able to withdraw the rebuke to me that I broke faith to you and usurped powers with which I was not entrusted. You will see that there is a wide distinction between quarrelling with my use of discretion and denying that I had any right to use discretion at all.—Yours truly,

E. T. C.

Cook adds :

Soon after this letter was posted Mr. Yates Thompson called, having come direct from Paris, and having first seen his paper at Dover. He was very angry and walked about the room swearing, wishing to God he had been back—why in the world couldn't Stead have waited, instead of being so utterly discourteous and lacking in consideration ?

Indeed, the regular reader who took his seat in the homeward train on the evening of Monday, June 25, 1888, may have been surprised and perplexed when he



opened his *Pall Mall* to find at the beginning of the leading article :

We have been publishing from day to day last week more or less snippety instalments of our Special Commissioner's Report from St. Petersburg upon the prospects of war or peace in Europe. Our Special Commissioner arrived himself from the Russian capital on Saturday night, and his personal report as to the sources of his information and the nature of the communications on the strength of which his estimate of the future outlook in Europe was based has necessitated our immediate adoption of a course which, though absolutely unprecedented in journalism, is fully justified by the unique nature and signal success of his Commission. We shall to-morrow begin the publication *de novo* of the whole of his report on "War or Peace?"—presenting to the readers instalments sufficiently lengthy to enable them to follow the drift of his argument, etc.

As a matter of fact Stead's articles had been published not in a "snippety" but in a very complete way. Cook had placed them each day at the foot of the leader page and continued them in the corresponding place on the following pages—a convenient and not inconspicuous position. The reader just mentioned must have been even more surprised when on the 26th he found columns and pages of his *Pall Mall* occupied with articles verbally identical with those with which he had been edified the previous week. Stead's conduct on this occasion was unpardonable. He inflicted a sort of public reprimand on his lieutenant, and sacrificed the interests of his paper and its readers for a rather petty revenge. Cook's editing of his articles was much more rational, and surely more acceptable to the general reader, who does not care to have too much of his paper occupied with a subject in which he may not himself be especially interested.

So the incident ended, but it perceptibly loosened Stead's roots in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Cook's Diary

gives us glimpses of him hankering after other sensations, aspiring to another martyrdom and landing the paper in libel suits. In the spring of 1889 he had formed a project for a "new *Times*", and one of his "sign-posts", *alias* his demon or familiar spirit, had announced to him that he would leave the *Pall Mall* on June 30. These mysterious intimations were awkward, because Stead was inclined to justify them, even at the expense of his own and other people's interests. On this occasion the fatal date was successfully weathered and that particular sign-post discredited. But though the chronology proved inaccurate the presentiment of a severance from the *Pall Mall* was well grounded.

Cook's entry in his Diary for December 12 and Saturday December 14 opens with the words, "in full crisis":

Stead, saying nothing to H. Y. T., concludes an arrangement with Newnes of *Tit-Bits* to edit the *Sixpenny Monthly*, a monthly "Tit-Bits" of the magazines,<sup>1</sup> having been hurried on and encouraged by very favourable letters from Balfour and some twenty other big people to whom he had written about it. He then writes to H. Y. T. saying: "You will be interested to hear, etc. etc.". H. Y. T. writes back saying: "I am open to conviction on this or any other subject, but I may say at once that I regard the editorship of Mr. Newnes's magazine as incompatible with that of the 'P.M.G.'. I have no intention of going halves in my editor with Mr. Newnes". Stead replies: "I accept your decision", and announces to us all that he is going to leave. That was on Thursday morning.

H. Y. T. took me to lunch on Thursday, read me the whole correspondence and sounded me provisionally as to accepting the editorship in succession to Stead. I said I would, but that I was sincerely anxious to see a truce with Stead arranged.

On Friday H. Y. T. and Stead had a long meeting. Leslie and Charles<sup>2</sup> told me it was all over, interview had been very stormy, breach widened, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards the *Review of Reviews*.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Henry Leslie, the manager, and Mr. Charles Morley.

On Thursday morning, Friday afternoon and twice to-day (Saturday) I had long talks with Stead. He was very kind to me, said I had worked with him as pleasantly as was possible, but ever since Russian crisis had felt it was all over with him—his work at the "P.M.G." was over—it was not his paper, but Thompson's and mine—that I had had most work and really edited the paper—that he had a presentiment that he should leave by December 31—couldn't make out why it didn't come true—had no idea when he entered into Newnes's business that it would lead to a final split (his idea being that H. Y. T. would agree subject to a reduction of salary, putting him and me on an equality, and letting him be free at the end of months), but that when he found it was going to lead to split his chief feeling was intense exultation that the sign-post was true!

I combated all this, saying he was fulfilling his own prophecies, but in a very foolish way. We all knew he would pass sooner or later to his big paper, but let him pass to it direct, not fall from "P.M.G." to monthly "Tit-Bits."

Cook was obviously in no hurry to step into Stead's editorial shoes. His relations with his chief had not always been comfortable, but it again illustrates the justice and detachment of his mind that he allowed no personal feelings to affect his estimate of Stead's genius. He strongly urged Mr. Thompson to leave the door open, and he even suggested to a common friend that she should appeal to Cardinal Manning to bring his influence to bear upon Stead. He reasoned continually with Stead, and on one of these occasions the latter became reminiscent:

I saw Stead again. He said he must go and his only desire was to leave no ragged edge. Told me story of his first resignation in 1882 *re* an atheistic article by Fitzjames Stephen<sup>1</sup> which Morley said he meant to put in. Morley caved in. "Ah", said

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Bart., Judge of the High Court. See page 46.

Canon Liddon to Stead, "that was worth living for". "Yes", I said to Stead, "but you were fighting for something then, but for nothing now". "Ah", rejoined Stead, "that depends on whether anything is worth fighting for", and went over his old arguments again. "But I'm very sorry", he said in parting, "to have given you so much bother in the business".

In the end Cook was formally installed as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* as from January 1, 1890. But Stead's position was undetermined. He still hovered spectrally on the borderland, coming daily to the office, "not writing", Cook tells us, "though giving me very useful hints, but seeing people, making appointments, using big room, etc., and also colloquing with Leslie on the irreparable loss he would be to the paper". Then we read of a sentimental letter Stead writes to Mrs. Thompson, his very good friend, which results in a suggestion from Mr. Thompson that Cook should engage Stead as a writer on salary under his editorship. "I objected to this", says Cook with some reason, "as putting me into a false position, since my long subordinate position and Stead's intrinsic weight would virtually make him editor". Mr. Thompson agreed that the arrangement was not an ideal one, but in the end Cook acquiesced for the sake of peace at any price. "So there, thank goodness", he writes on January 9, 1890, "is an end to the bother. I remain nominal editor, with Stead as political director. A bad plan, I think, and an unpleasant, but I must do my best to give it a fair trial".

The trial was not a long one, for on February 1 Stead made no appearance. Mr. Thompson had taken exception to some passages relating to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in an interview Stead had accorded to the *Star*. Thus Cook's kingdom was no longer divided, and he became solely responsible for an organ of opinion which wielded

an immense influence on government and policy—a responsibility on which a serious call was about to be made.

Cook had not been long in the editorship when the floodgates of political excitement were thrown open in the famous, or rather infamous Parnell-O'Shea affair. It is not necessary to rewrite the history of that sordid drama, but the main facts must be recalled. Captain O'Shea obtained his divorce from his wife on the ground of her adultery with Mr. Parnell on November 17, 1890. On November 24 Mr. Gladstone wrote to Mr. Morley his decisive letter about the Irish leadership, the purport of which was to be communicated to Parnell. If Parnell had had any trace in his constitution of disinterested patriotism, not to mention any spark of gratitude to a great statesman and to a great Party which at heavy sacrifices had espoused his country's cause, he would have resigned his leadership after the divorce trial. But the baseness of the man was manifest throughout the whole transaction. Cook had many visits after the trial from Captain O'Shea, and he records the conversations in his Diary. There is no reason to dispute the truth of the Captain's revelations. "But really", asks Cook on one occasion, "weren't you too trustful and confiding for anything?"

"Well", he replied, "I did trust the man implicitly, like a father trusts a son. You must remember I had taken him up when he was a pariah and none of his own class would have a word to say to him. The treachery of that man passes belief. Often we would dine together at club at his invitation, and he would leave me at 11 and go down to my wife. Then on Sunday morning I would go down to Eltham, and his hat, coat and stick would be arranged in the hall to look as if he had just come".

Parnell's treachery to his country was just as gross. Instead of resigning and removing the stigma of the divorce scandal from the national cause, he chose to fight for his own selfish ends. On November 29 he turned on the best friend Ireland ever had, and charged Mr. Gladstone with having stated during his visit to Hawarden in the previous December that in any future scheme of Home Rule the Irish members would be reduced from 103 to 32, land would be withdrawn from the purview of the Irish Parliament and the constabulary would be retained under Imperial control, though paid for by Irish funds. Moreover, Mr. Morley had endeavoured to corrupt the Irish party by offers of place in a Liberal Government.

It was natural to ask, if this story was true, why Mr. Parnell had suppressed these facts for a whole year ; and why after the said interview at Hawarden Mr. Parnell, speaking at Liverpool, had called on Lancashire to rally to its "grand old leader". "My countrymen, rejoice", he had cried, "for we are on the safe path to our legitimate freedom and our future prosperity". But Mr. Gladstone's reply disposed of Parnell's insidious manœuvre. The whole discussion, he said, had been one of those informal exchanges of view which go to all political action and in which men feel the ground and discover the leanings of one another's minds. No single proposal had been made, no proposition mentioned to which a binding assent was sought. Points of possible improvement in the Bill of 1886 had been named as having risen in Mr. Gladstone's mind, or been suggested by others, but no positive conclusions were asked for or were expected or were possible. As regards the allegations of political seduction, Mr. Morley's emphatic denials were rightly regarded as final.

The policy of the *Pall Mall* during these excitements

was again decisive. The day after the divorce proceedings ended Cook wrote in his leading article :

Rightly or wrongly the Irish will let things be. But this fact does not for a moment relieve Mr. Parnell of his duty. On the contrary it gives him an opportunity, which we live in hope that he will seize, of doing an act of spontaneous reparation, of making almost a virtue, in fact, of what might have been a necessity. It is Mr. Parnell's clear duty to send in his resignation to his constituents. . . . Can any sane man believe that the Home Rule cause will benefit during the next six months by the hero of the many *aliases* being retained as one of the twin commanders-in-chief, or that the fire-escape<sup>1</sup> will be the golden bridge to conduct the waverers back to Liberal fealty.

Cook reinforced this policy, which was quite in the line of the "P.M.G.'s" moral tradition, in subsequent leading articles. Ten years later he wrote some reminiscences in the *Universal Magazine* in which he recalls these incidents :

One of the most exciting mornings in my editorial experience was that on which Mr. Parnell's manifesto was published after the revelations in the O'Shea Divorce Case. The whole crisis was one of the most dramatic in modern politics. The Home Rule cause had been steadily gaining ground in England. Mr. Gladstone's unceasing efforts seemed on the eve of success. The Pigott Commission had strengthened Mr. Parnell's position. An alliance with the Liberal Party had been formed. There was a banquet to Mr. Parnell at the Eighty Club, and a reception at the Grosvenor Gallery. Cold, impassive and inscrutable, he had moved through the rooms, the object of universal curiosity, and of some enthusiasm. Then, unexpectedly to most people, and with results expected only by a very few, had come the O'Shea Divorce Case. It was a political bombshell. Enthusiasm was chilled on the instant. Home Rulers, who knew not Parnell, were aghast at the cold selfishness of a man who could have endangered so much for what seemed to them so little. Colleagues who followed but feared him began to whisper against him. In this

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<sup>1</sup> A certain fire-escape figured prominently in the incidents of the adultery.

country the Nonconformist conscience was deeply stirred. Mr. Schnadhorst began to shake his head : an incalculable factor had been introduced into all our essays in political meteorology. Mr. Gladstone, after a short period of hesitation, had written his famous Letter, declaring that if Parnell remained at the head of the Irish Party his own retention of the leadership of the Liberal Party would be rendered "almost a nullity".

There were a few days of great tension in the political world ; and then on the morning of Saturday, November 29, 1890, appeared Mr. Parnell's manifesto giving a garbled version of confidential interviews with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley, brushing aside the whole divorce case scandal as a pretext too thin even to be mentioned, and calling on the Irish people not to "throw me to the English wolves now howling for my destruction". The tone and text of this manifesto were alike of the utmost importance. It was obvious that the Home Rule question, and with it the whole aspect of domestic politics at that time, were profoundly affected by Mr. Parnell's action. After writing my leader on the manifesto, I went off to see Mr. Gladstone. He spoke alike of the manifesto and of Parnell personally in terms of far less restraint than those which he subsequently put on paper. He was intensely indignant with the perfidy, as it seemed to him, of the whole proceeding. He must have felt profoundly the perils of the situation. But for the moment he seemed rather to be drinking delight of battle with his peers ; his manner was brisk and lively, and in his eye there gleamed a fire that I shall never forget. Mr. Gladstone had already composed a reply to the manifesto. It was written on his favourite unruled quarto paper and showed very few erasures. None of his colleagues were consulted before it was written, though one of his principal lieutenants afterwards made two or three trifling suggestions which were adopted in the text as revised later in the day for the Press. Before sending it to the Press, Mr. Gladstone allowed me to peruse it, and I hurried back to the office with that peculiar alacrity and self-satisfaction which steal over the journalist who supposes himself to have got a start, no matter how trifling, over his rivals.

Cook duly chronicled in his Diary his interview with Mr. Gladstone on that memorable November 29. It



was a busy morning at 1 Carlton Gardens. Cook met Herbert Gladstone on the doorstep and was in due course taken down to the library (Ripon's old study).

Here were also Mrs. Gladstone, Arnold Morley, Carmichael, Spencer Lyttelton and Stuart (Harcourt afterwards coming in and going to G. O. M. with a dreary smile : " Well, Mr. Gladstone, what times we are having ! " ). G. at once came up to me, looked very brisk and flowing over with a kind of battle glee. Took my hand firmly and held it while he said : " I must apologise to you, Mr. Cook, for keeping you knocking about and treating you so cavalierly. And next let me pay you a compliment—I must do so for it is a well-deserved compliment—on your paper under your management : the conduct of it has been good, so far as I can judge, very good. And now ", turning to Stuart, " what I propose is this : I have committed to writing what I have to say in reply to Mr. Parnell, and I have sent for the Central News and the Press Association to communicate it to the papers generally. But I suggest that you and Mr. Stuart should read it jointly first for your respective papers ". Stuart and I began to read accordingly standing. " No, sit down ", said Mr. G. ; " don't mind me. For one thing my deafness is beginning to help me in that way and you won't inconvenience me at all ". W. E. G. then went to a writing-table in one of the windows and stood reading letters, being presently joined by Harcourt. Mrs. Gladstone was writing at a table in another window—a curious omnium gatherum *mise-en-scène*.

Cook's editorial period on the *Pall Mall* was otherwise rather a slack time in political happenings. These were the closing years of a Unionist Administration when General Elections seemed to indicate some reflux of the tide in the Liberal favour. But the flow was too shallow and languid, as it proved, to carry the Liberal ship into really navigable water. Turning over the files we are struck with the evidences of able and careful editorship, with a high and sustained literary standard and with a complete freedom from dulness and monotony. Cook made every number as interesting as possible.

He would send up to the printer's room any little paragraph of incident or comment or gossip which might lighten or brighten his columns. Cook was an excellent listener as well as talker, and many a neighbour at luncheon or dinner has been surprised to find in the paper next day some story or comment that had fallen from him in the course of conversation. Cook was indeed the "chiel takin' notes", and might be always trusted to "prent it". He was happy, it should be added, in his helpers. On succeeding to the editorship he appointed as his assistant Mr. Edmund Garrett, whose ill-health soon caused the substitution of Mr. J. A. Spender, Cook's successor in the editorship of the *Westminster Gazette*.

It is not surprising that Mr. Thompson should have been well satisfied with his paper and his editor. "The reign of Mr. Cook", wrote Stead, just after the catastrophe, "was one of untroubled placidity. The last time I saw Mr. Thompson he emphasized his satisfaction at the way in which things were going. He said that Cook was the best editor he had ever had". This halcyon calm was to be rudely interrupted by a storm which swooped with little warning from a blue sky.

## CHAPTER VII

### FROM "PALL MALL" TO "WESTMINSTER"

My ambition is character, not office.—WILLIAM PITT, the Younger.

AN entry in Cook's Diary under May 1892 reads rather ominously. "This summer", he writes, "H. Y. T. was approached by some lawyers, on behalf, I believe, of the Polish Jew who is Kops Ale, to sell 'P.M.G.'. They ultimately made a firm offer of £50,000. One Sunday at Ringsall H. Y. T. told me all this, and asked what my intentions were as to the future. I said I had no desire to leave the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Then that settled him, he said; and two days later he told me he had written finally declining. He had been tempted to sell, he said; and if I had any idea of leaving he should have done so. He got on with me but might not with another".

Cook seems to have given no further thought to this incident. He carried his paper through the General Election of the summer which resulted in a great Liberal disappointment. He had developed a gift for political meteorology. Indeed he had few equals in the management and interpretation of electoral figures, and the *Pall Mall* had the full benefit of this editorial talent in the elections of 1892. Then Cook "downed tools" and started for his usual Continental tour. He was through two-thirds of a delightful holiday when the blow

fell. Many years afterwards (1914) he told the story in the *Westminster Gazette*:

There is a courtyard of an old Italian inn which is impressed indelibly on my memory. Do any of my readers know the little town of Biella? It is now, I believe, much "industrialized", and I am not aware that it contains any notable works of art; but it is a convenient centre from which to visit many of the Sanctuaries described enticingly by the author of *Erewhon*, and it stands in that beautiful region where the Alps meet the plain in softest harmony. In the late summer of 1892 I was taking a holiday in that region, and on a sparkling morning in September we were setting out to drive from Biella to Varallo. The horses' heads were just emerging from the courtyard of the Testa Grigia when the landlord came running after us with a telegram. It contained the words: "Letter of importance posted to-day to Biella. Await receipt". We were in holiday mood and the telegram cast no shadow. Varallo could wait. The day's delay would enable us to take a shorter excursion and visit yet another Sanctuary, one which is left undescribed in Butler's book. It was a delicious drive up the Val Andorno, and then through beech woods to San Giovanni. It commands an entrancing view; the air is invigorating. The founders of these Alpine pilgrimage-places had a happy instinct, and the health-cures, to which innumerable Ex Votos attest, need not be attributed wholly to miraculous intervention. Next morning came the letter; and with it the holiday and the holiday mood were ended. The letter suggested that my immediate return was desirable, as the *Pall Mall Gazette*, with which I had been connected for ten years, during the last three of them as editor, had been sold over my head to a new proprietor. I received the letter on September 22, and two days later I reached London.

Cook found the office in a state of clamant protest, this callous transference of the whole staff to a new and unknown master savouring rather of the cattle-market. The emotions on both sides seem rather extravagant in these days of a "commercialized Press", when such buyings and sellings are more frequent. But Cook

points out what an exceptionally happy comradeship prevailed in Northumberland Street. "Never was there a more united or a more hard-working staff than that of the *Pall Mall* in the days which I remember. With my former assistant-editor, the late Edmund Garrett, and with his successor, the present editor of the *Westminster*, I was on terms not only of the closest co-operation but also of personal affection. And then, too, we were all young in those days. We were proud of our positions, glad of our opportunities and devoted to what we always called fondly 'the old *Pall Mall*', in which our ambitions and ideals were centred".

Cook found Mr. Thompson at their first meeting "very much engrossed with his excellent bargain and wanting my opinion thereon. He had put £20,000 into the paper and now had a chance of selling at £50,000, besides the profits he had recently drawn out and avoiding heavy capital expenditure that would shortly be necessary for new machinery and the enlargement of premises, etc.". Mr. Thompson then went on to speak of the less ponderable interests involved. It is sad work, as Lord Byron remarked, to analyse motives. No doubt the personal benefits to Mr. Yates Thompson derived from ten years' newspaper proprietorship had not been very substantial. For example, Mr. Thompson was still plain Mr. Thompson, though, to judge from analogy, it would have been simple enough to acquire for him some titular suffix as a reward for his services to Liberalism. What he said to his editor on this occasion is carefully set out in Cook's Diary :

As for the Party I feel no compunctions at all. They have never done anything for me, though I did a real service to them in 1880 by turning the paper round. They despise the Press. Mr. Gladstone might easily have kept the *Chronicle* and probably the *Telegraph* if he had baroneted Lloyd and Lawson ; and if

they had ever done anything for me I don't suppose I should be selling now. But think of Harcourt's insolent remark to a meeting of new M.P.'s after the election: "A majority of 40 is a great thing to have won in spite of the opposition of *The Times* and the support of the *Daily News*". I regret the appearance of desertion to you, Leslie and Morley (to which I assented by silence). But the arrangements I propose will leave everybody free financially to look round them, and these shufflings of cards often turn out well.

Mr. Thompson was unable, or unwilling, to inform even his responsible editor who was the real purchaser of the paper. Mr. Keighley "of the National Liberal Club", who was conducting the business, was obviously only a phantasm, the principals remaining in the background. All Mr. Thompson would vouchsafe was that the purchaser was a rich man of business, much in the same position as Mr. Steinkopf when he bought the *St. James's Gazette*, and Mr. Thompson's theory was that he merely wanted a paper "as a man might want a pony". It turned out, however, that even Mr. Löwenfeld, "a gentleman Polish by birth, Jewish by race and Roman Catholic by religion", who was obviously qualified to control a great organ of opinion by his ownership of a non-exhilarating beverage known as Kops Ale, was not himself the ultimate bidder. Various were the rumours as to the identity of the real purchaser, the conjectures ranging from Lord Randolph Churchill to the German Emperor. He materialized later into Mr. William Waldorf Astor, an American of the Astor clan who, after representing his country at the Court of Italy for some time, was now settled in Berkeley Square.

On September 30 at 5.30 Mr. Thompson who, we are told, had previously wept in Mr. Charles Morley's room, assembled the office in Cook's sanctum, and "in semi-darkness", writes Cook, "made his speech, hardly

keeping up and big tears on his cheeks". Cook had placed a reporter in the room so that Mr. Thompson's speech has been preserved verbatim. He said :

The gist of my communication is that I have to-day, from private reasons I need not go into for sufficient reasons, contracted for the sale of my interest in these two newspapers, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Pall Mall Budget*, to Mr. T. Dove Keighley, a gentleman whose name, I suspect, you are not acquainted with. I know him as a man with the command of considerable money, and as a member of the National Liberal Club. He tells me he is of Liberal politics, and he intends to conduct the papers on very much the same lines as they have been conducted during my time here. You see this is a serious announcement personally, because it puts an end to our connection, or will do so when the contract takes effect and the papers pass over to this gentleman, which will be some time in the course of next month. This is a painful separation to me in some ways, and I flatter myself none of you will rejoice at it. I do not think that likely. What I regret is the suddenness of it, and the selling the papers over your heads. In extenuation I want you to take into consideration the nature of newspaper property. It is such that the sale cannot be otherwise than sudden, for had I made it known that the paper was for sale it is quite certain it would not have been sold. It would have depreciated, and the only way to deal with newspaper property is to take the opportunity and deal with the man who is willing, when he comes, and that was the case on this occasion.

It is not without a pang that I make this announcement. Since I have had to do with the paper now for over twelve years, it has undergone great changes—almost entirely, I think, for the better. I think the paper deserves very well both of you—and if I may say it—of myself. We have made it a very different thing to what it was. I have told Mr. Keighley, with perfect truth, that the paper was never so efficiently manned in every department as it is now. We have had, as you know, able men as editors, though none other so able an editor as our present one. The paper has made enormous advances lately, and that, in short, is owing to Mr. Charles Morley and to Mr. Leslie as well. As Mr. Leslie got accustomed to his duties, he showed exceptional ability as manager, while all the other departments are thoroughly well equipped.

I do not believe Mr. Keighley purposes making any changes ; he intends to carry out the present lines, and he will be very unwise, I think, if he does not. While I have had personal relations with this staff, besides I have had business relations, and your best services you have always unsparingly rendered. In suddenly ending our connection, I propose to give no notice of any sort. In selling over your heads and breaking any contract, you have a right legally to claim compensation that may be due from breakage of contract ; but for my part I intend in every case to make such payment to each member of the staff with whom I have had such contract, as will be very considerably above what he could have got under any legal contract. That, I think, is the least I can do. I feel great sorrow on the termination of our contract, and I sometimes doubt the reasons, good as they were, that induced me to make this change. I do not think I have anything more to say.

Mr. Thompson knew that Mr. Keighley of the National Liberal Club (the emphasis on this address as a guarantee of orthodoxy and financial solidarity is frequent and noticeable) was not the principal, but apparently he did not know who was the real “man of substance” in the far background. It is almost incredible, but he seems to have been at no adequate pains to discover to whom he was actually selling. At the close of this valedictory oration Cook tells us there was a painful silence. He himself moved to the door, but the aching void was filled by Mr. William Hill, the news-editor, who spoke in kindly terms of past relationships—“so ingrained”, remarks Cook, “is respect for capitalism even in its slaves”.

It would have been a great convenience to the new proprietors to continue the existing staff, including the editor, over the period of transition from Liberalism to Conservatism. Cook was to be a “stop-gap”, and an accessory to the betrayal of the fortress to the enemy. His own account of his conversation with the agents on



this point is entertaining. He easily takes the measure of the gentlemen with whom he was dealing, quite sees through them and pours successive cold douches over their ingenious and hopeful heads.

At 2.30 (October 3) Thompson introduced me to Keighley ("Well, Mr. Cook, we are resuming an acquaintance"), and Adams, solicitor, and left me to discuss with them. K. said, "We are anxious to retain your services. I don't know any man in London whom I would rather see in the editor's chair, and we want to know your views". [Mr. Keighley could scarcely have begun more inauspiciously. He invited the first bucketful.] I said (continues Cook), "I am in the position of a listener. I understand from Mr. Thompson that on October 15 he proposes to dismiss me by selling the paper over my head. On that day, then, I shall leave the office, and I await any proposals with interest". "We are very anxious to secure your continuance and desire to hear your views". "Well, first, I must know with whom I am dealing—they would know that statements had been made, etc., etc.". Adams then said they were in no way responsible for any such statements. They did not deny that Löwenfeld was the proprietor, but it was Keighley with whom I had to deal. "Yes", struck in K., "with me and me alone. A newspaper may be divided into two branches: (1) commercial: for that Mr. Löwenfeld, represented here by Mr. Adams, has provided, and we may dismiss it entirely from our consideration; (2) literary, political, social and artistic, and for that I alone am to be dealt with".

I wanted to know exactly where I was. K. seemed to speak of himself as proprietor, but I thought A. called L. so. "Excuse me", said A., "we don't deny that L. is the proprietor; but neither do we affirm it". "Then, pray explain". And A. set forth how the thing was K.'s idea, but "any one who knows Mr. K. knows he has not the money", "and how L. found most of it". "Then I understand the facts to be these: that Mr. K. is the legal and actual proprietor, but that behind Mr. K. is Mr. L., who finds the money. That is the state of facts on which one must form one's opinions". "That is so".

Messrs. Keighley and Adams were obviously receiving

a salutary lesson in clearness of thought and expression. It is noticeable, too, that Cook had quietly reversed the rôles of examiner and examinee.

Then we started again, K. reiterating their desire to retain my services. I said they must put any proposals they have to make in writing; but with a view to enabling them to see whether it was worth while to make any proposals, and, if so, what, I would discuss matters. I then laid down as essential preliminaries (1) absolute control over the whole sheet; (2) appointment of editorial staff; (3) assurance of harmonious relations with manager; (4) a year's engagement. They let (1), (2) and (3) pass without remark, but on (4) we came to loggerheads. Adams assumed I would take the same terms as now, viz. £1200 and three months' notice. I said we should not be likely to quarrel about salary, but the three months was quite impossible. Didn't he know that a year was the legally established custom of the trade for editors? Only my intimate relations with and confidence in Mr. Thompson had induced me to accept three months with him—very foolishly, I added, as it now turned out. Let them enquire what conditions John Morley made.<sup>1</sup> No: my view of the equity of the situation was an engagement for a year on their side, with power to break on mine at three months. I, *qua* editor, was a known factor, with experience to put at their disposal. They were entirely unknown to me.

"Quite monstrous, most inequitable", said Adams. "And suppose we differed", said K. "Until Parliament meets—that is why we suggest the shorter period—we are sure to agree; but when the session begins our views might diverge [Cook, of course, seeing through all this]. The Liberal majority is small; no one agrees as to what it means, or as to what the Home Rule Bill will be; the 'P.M.G.' has never been a slavish party organ like the *Daily News*. Now, if we differed, would it not be intolerable to you as a man of honour to continue on the paper?" "Not at all, so long as I was able to say what I liked". [This thrust of Cook's logical rapier must have been a staggerer for Mr. Keighley.] "In fact, Mr. K. is to pay you £1200", interposed

<sup>1</sup> These were certainly very stiff. Mr. Morley had successive arrangements with his proprietor. They were for one or two years at £2000 a year, with no notice or a very short notice to be given by him for determination.

A., "if he differs". Would I not accept a larger salary for a shorter period?" No, that would not suit my views at all. Was this final? Yes. "Well, I'm sorry, Mr. Cook, very sorry", said K. "Oh, don't be sorry", I replied; "I quite understand your views, and I daresay if I were in your place, I should take the same; but they don't suit my views".

Cook's interlocutors in this and other occasions must have realized the truth of Mr. J. A. Spender's remark that "to get into controversy with Cook was a dangerous adventure for the oldest hand, for it was impossible to catch him tripping in any matter of fact or to beat him at the game of verbal retort".<sup>1</sup>

The difference between the two parties to the controversy is clear. The purchasers wanted Cook as a convenient stepping-stone to effect the transition from the one camp to the other. A Unionist friend of Cook's who came on behalf of the purchasers urged him to remain on their terms. "The buyer was making heavy pecuniary sacrifices for his political convictions, and naturally could not give unfettered control for a year; but the curve was to be gradual. There would be no idea, of course, of asking me to write a word of which I disapproved. But why should I not write on more or less neutral subjects, such as recent leaders? Would I do so for a few months at £200 a month or any other sum I liked? I told Maxse I was sure he would see, if he put himself into my place, that I could not agree to be used thus as a stop-gap".

Cook might have had no objection to prolong the Liberal life of the paper for a year or longer, if he had had complete control. The new Parliament was to meet on January 31 of the next year, and the Liberal party, with its precarious majority, would need the best support obtainable. Cook might have been willing to carry on

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix to *The Press in War Time* (E. T. Cook).

for these purposes and on his own terms, but a *bouche-trou* for the convenience of the incoming enemy he was immovably determined never to be.

In fact there were big moral issues at stake. The general public were under an impression that writers on newspapers believed what they wrote. Cook (and in all this he was strongly backed by J. A. Spender and Edmund Garrett) was determined that, so far as his influence went, this should remain true. But that was not all. He was determined to show that, as he put it, newspaper men might be sold, but they could not be bought. They were not hirelings, to be transferred at pleasure from one master to another, from one political confession to another. On the "commercial" principle there was no reason why conscience should thus intervene, or why a man should not sell his pen and his talent, as Captain Dalgetty sold his sword, to the highest bidder. But Cook abominated this spirit, and he was destined ten years later to testify against it once more. He was not to be talked or tempted out of obeying what he conceived to be the clear promptings of duty. On October 7 he had two more interviews with "K"; "very vague and wordy, but as he made no advance on the six months, I told him definitely that I should go, as the general tone of his conversations seemed unsatisfactory". Let us hear Cook's later recollection of these events :

There ensued a course of mystification which was teasing at the time, but which, in retrospect, is richly comic. There were ostensible proprietors in various degrees. There were dark intermediaries and secret emissaries. A stage-army of transient and embarrassed phantoms appeared and disappeared. If the men of straw inclined to be communicative, the men of law interposed with oracular caution, "neither denying nor affirming". I cherish only one grievance against those responsible for this superfluous mystery. They professed a high regard for my

intellectual equipment. It was obvious that in reality they had the lowest opinion of it; the taradiddles were so transparent, the equivocations so obvious, as to be calculated to deceive only a babe or a man who wished to be deceived. Within a very few days it was clear that none of the ostensible purchasers was the real purchaser; and that the intention of the real purchaser was to change the politics of the paper. We broke off negotiations forthwith and prepared to go forth into the wilderness.

Cook was not alone: with him into the wilderness went J. A. Spender, assistant-editor; Edmund Garrett; Mr. William Hill, news editor, loyal and irreproachable in character; Miss Friederichs, chief interviewer; Mr. Charles Morley, who passed from Budget to Budget, and last but not least the invaluable political cartoonist, Mr. F. Carruthers Gould. I do not wish to make too tragic a business of these happenings, but this little company must have the credit of having thrown up work and wage rather than turn their coats and sell their souls.

Financially Mr. Thompson treated the staff with a generosity which far outpassed his strict legal obligations. To Cook, though bound only for three months, he paid a full year's salary (£1200). The rest were proportionately paid off, and an equitable arrangement was made with regard to vested interests in the "Extras".

The gravamen of the complaints against Mr. Thompson, it should be noted, was not that he sold his paper, but that he sold it without sufficient assurance that it would not be transferred to the enemy. "The statement was made to him, but of course this was not binding, that the purchaser was a Liberal and intended to carry on the paper as at present". So Cook reports Mr. Thompson as saying, and Mr. Thompson made a similar intimation to the staff on September 30. The whole transaction of the sale was wrapped in mystery.

Two conclusions seem at any rate to be well justified : that Mr. Thompson made no sufficient effort to arrive at the real purchaser and that he equally failed to obtain any positive guarantee that the policy of the paper would not be changed.

The reader may object that Mr. Thompson owned the paper and was therefore free to do as he liked with it. Yet even to-day one may be permitted to make a distinction between the ownership of an established newspaper and the ownership of a house or a motor-car. The newspaper proprietor gathers obligations to a large body of readers, who have grown accustomed to rely on the paper for the expression and defence of certain political principles. He has to consider the interest of a political party, and to sell the paper witlessly of its future destinies is like betraying a powerful and well-equipped fortress to the enemy. Then there is the staff of the paper, a body of men who may have given of their best, perhaps more than they were paid for, to a paper in which they were morally and politically, as well as materially, interested. "The reader", writes Cook in his *Edmund Garrett* (p. 67), "can have no knowledge of the amount of labour, zeal and enthusiasm thrown into what we always fondly called 'the old *Pall Mall*', or of the hopes, ambitions, ideals which centred in it". Newspaper-owning has something of the character of a trust. Mr. Thompson told Cook, as already recorded, that his intended buyer was a rich man "who merely wanted a paper as a man might want a pony". We are assured that journalism is now a business and not a profession ; but some old-fashioned persons may still doubt whether Mr. Thompson was morally justified in selling to a buyer whose motive and object he knew to be such.

Mr. Thompson sold the body of the *Pall Mall Gazette* but not its spirit. The sacred fires were carried away

from the old hearth and fostered in a new home. The *Pall Mall* staff had shown that there were still some things that could not be priced and paid for, that Rome was not entirely venal ; and the worth of this testimony was generally recognized. At a complimentary dinner given to Cook and his assistants in London, attended by a large representation of the Press, Metropolitan and provincial, this significance of the event was clearly brought out by Mr. E. R. Russell, Mr. Alfred Milner, then chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, and other speakers. Cook alluded without bitterness to his recent experiences : " He did not object to be a humble penny-a-liner if the line was straight, but would not consent to be a ' mercenary curvilinear ' " .

To an interviewer from the *Daily Chronicle* who put to him the question, " Practically, then, Mr. Cook, the attempt to re-enlist you under Tory colours has failed all round ? " Cook replied :

Yes. And very satisfactory has it been from the journalist's point of view to know that we can hang together sufficiently to defeat the notion that we can be sold by a proprietor as if we were the " live stock " of a business, to be disposed of to the highest bidder. At first it was disturbing enough to find the owner of an important paper selling a political organ with no guarantee against its falling into the hands of his opponents. But the action of my colleagues has entirely neutralized the blow to the profession.

It is not surprising to find the Liberal leaders condoling with Cook over the loss of this Liberal stronghold. Mr. Gladstone writes from Hawarden Castle, October 16 (1892) :

One word only to say it is with the most sincere regret that I receive both branches of your intimation.

From the Chief Secretary's Lodge, Phoenix Park, on the same day, comes Mr. Morley's sympathy :

I have read your letter with lively interest and very painful interest as you may well believe. I regard it, as I have told everybody in our party, as a most disagreeable and damaging blow—all the more so as coming at a most critical time, just when we shall stand in most need of a friend in the press so acute, vigilant and judicious as the “P.M.G.” has been in your hands.

I cannot doubt what the answer will be to your questions, or that a new paper on the lines of the “P.M.G.” would certainly receive all the support that is practicable from the Liberal party and its chief men. This is assured, speaking generally. But you must add particulars. I will promptly answer any of these particular questions that you may choose to put to me, and I shall be glad to serve you, at this vexatious moment, by any means in my power.

Lord Rosebery writes from the Durdans, Epsom, on October 21 :

It is indeed difficult to say what I feel in the loss of the *Pall Mall*, for loss I fear it must be counted. Just before I received your note I took up the evening's issue and said with a groan, “Cook's last number”.

And the next day, with an invitation to dinner :

It is not very easy to express in words what I feel about the disestablishment of the “P.M.G.”; but it is a great loss and blank.

Mr. Haldane, Mr. Bryce, Lord Aberdeen write in terms equally solicitous.

But in the meantime wonderful things were happening. The little company of sufferers for conscience' sake had scarcely advanced a day's march into the wilderness when they were recalled. Mr. George Newnes, who had joined hands with an editor of the “P.M.G.” three years before, now approached another at a more poignant crisis. He wrote to Cook on October 8 :



I have heard that the "P.M.G." is to become a Unionist organ. If so, would you be disposed to enter into an arrangement to start another penny evening on the old lines of the "P.M.G." ? A scheme of this kind has been running through my head, and I think would find favour with some of the leading men in the party.

I should like to talk it over with you. Could you see me at my offices in Southampton Row on Tuesday afternoon, or suggest some other appointment ?

The meeting took place and a single interview sufficed for a settlement. Cook's terms must have been anticipated by Mr. Newnes. The editor was to have "full discretion as to the political policy of the paper and general control over the contents of the sheet on the understanding that the new paper will be conducted on the same general lines as those of the 'P.M.G.' during my editorship thereof". In view of what had happened on the "P.M.G.", "before any offer for the purchase of the paper be accepted, the purchase to be open to me (Cook), during the editorship, for 14 days on the same terms". And "the engagement to be for 3 years, but after the first year with option on my part to terminate the agreement at 3 months' notice". Mr. Newnes, Cook tells us, accepted these terms without delay, except that he said "You could turn it into a Tory organ". "That was governed", Cook replied, "by 'on the understanding'". He didn't want to be a "mere 'D.N.'", he explained, for "independent support was really the best support".

Thus the soul of the old *Pall Mall* was re-embodied, and a happy comradeship renewed under another name and in a new abode, but otherwise in an atmosphere scarcely distinguishable from the old. Such was the first chapter in the genesis of the *Westminster Gazette*, a paper which was to replace, and more than replace, the old *Pall Mall* as a Liberal organ.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE "WESTMINSTER GAZETTE"

A Preaching Friar settles himself in every village ; and builds a pulpit which he calls a newspaper. Therefrom he preaches what most momentous doctrine is in him, for man's salvation. . . . Look well thou seest everywhere a new Clergy of the Mendicant Orders, some bare-footed, some almost bare-backed, fashion itself into shape, and teach and preach, zealously enough, for copper alms and the love of God.—CARLYLE.

DURING the Pythagorean process of migration from *Pall Mall* to *Westminster*, and during his editorship of the latter, Cook was much in political society. He was an inimitable reporter and he faithfully recorded what he heard and saw in his own private daily chronicle. On October 14 (1892) he writes a vivid little note on a luncheon at the "Metropole" with the Carnegies. Lord Tennyson's death had left the poetic laurel vacant, and there was a good deal of competition among minor British bards for the succession. Mr. Swinburne, the greatest living poet and the obvious successor, was for political reasons *hors concurrence*. Cook writes :

Sir Edwin Arnold promptly turned the conversation on his chances as Poet Laureate, and ran down Lewis Morris. Talked, to the delight of the American women, about "we poets". "You abuse us and maltreat us in our lives, and only give us the laurels when we are dead. But we do not complain, for you are right. It is so high a calling and those who venture to climb the sacred Hill of Parnassus must expect to be wounded on the way". Enlarged on his motto never to say anything against anybody. "Yes", said Carnegie, "and that's why you say

nothing worth saying". And he told the story of the Scotsman who recounted his successes in life to his son. "And how, my lad, do you suppose I did it?" "By your abilities". "Don't be a fool, lad. I got on by bowing. I've never been able to remain covered in the presence of powers that be".

At this time Mr. Gladstone had just formed his fourth Administration at the age of 83, Lord Rosebery being again Foreign Secretary. Cook gives us some vivid glimpses of the statesman's marvellous versatility and vigour in these latest days of his political life.

Dined with Rosebery at 38 Berkeley Square—G.O.M., Lord Acton, French Ambassador, Lord Cromer and other guests. G.O.M. looked very fit, very full of his Oxford lectures and bookish points generally. He shook hands with me, and was so sorry I was *en disponibilité*. He talked during dinner of Oxford and Cambridge, the High and the Backs; said Ruskin had in conversation with him abused King's Chapel; of Monk's *Life of Bentley*, which he said was one of the best of books, and the public didn't know it—you can obtain it quite cheap. He remembered when Macaulay's *History* came out; he read it at the same time and turned from one to the other book on equal terms.

Discussed the question who was the greatest English political writer, deciding for Burke. It was curious that Burke, who on America and Ireland was almost infallibly right, was so wrong about France. Yet Lecky in a footnote—and then he and Lord Acton bandied about dates and footnotes. Talked of the Lansdownes, Northumberlands, Jerseys, of political salons, Whigs, etc.

Rosebery asked him if he had any announcement, premature or otherwise, to make about the Poet Laureate. He said the best thing would be to let it lie in abeyance. Rosebery said, "But if so, our successors will appoint Alfred Austin". "You seem needlessly anxious", said Gladstone, laughing, "to instal our successors".

"The last time I saw Tennyson"; he said, "was just after Browning's funeral. 'I've no doubt he's a great genius', said Tennyson, and then rousing his voice, 'but I can't read him'".

Baring sat next to Gladstone, and seemed to have on his face all the time an expression of "Why go on about books and

libraries and Latin coinages and Irvingites when you have the affairs of Egypt on your shoulders ? ”

After dinner Waddington took G.O.M. to a sofa, and we heard him talking about Shan States. Before dinner G.O.M. punctiliously waited for the noble lords to go in first, and insisted on Baring and Acton preceding him.

As others were going (10.30), Rosebery whispered to me to stay, and we smoked and talked in his study (with piles of despatch boxes) for an hour. I asked him if he found the work very hard. “ Very incessant ”, he said ; “ always a pile of those boxes, but not so bad as in 1886, as I know my way about now ”. Did he have to report to Mr. G., or did he care nothing about it ? More than in 1886, and now that his confounded Universities were done with, he had some faint hope that he would take some interest in the affairs of the nation ; but he had been keen about Uganda.

Rosebery didn't believe there was anybody in the country under sixty who was a Cobdenite. “ Harcourt ? ” “ He's over sixty ”. “ Morley ? ” “ He's Cobden's biographer ”. I asked if he counted Morley as a hostile force. “ He's sincerely opposed to me on foreign policy, but he would never thwart me ; he's about my closest political friend ”.

We talked about the “ P.M.G. ”, new and old, he propounding exactly what I hold as to the value of independent support.

*Re* G.O.M.'s absorption. Rosebery said to him at dinner, “ What news do you hear of Dean Liddell ? ” “ The very best, and I've been corresponding with him about my Latin neologism of ‘ obtenebratio ’ ”, which he proceeded to turn to Lord Cromer and discuss.

A few days later Cook met Gladstone again at Mr. George Russell's and sat once more next to Lord Acton. The G.O.M. on this occasion talked chiefly about church hymns and organs.

Russell, who has a wonderful memory, recited a very fine poem by Faber on “ The Old Labourer ”. G.O.M. said that curiously he had written nothing else so good, his expressly devotional hymns being far inferior. The finest hymn he knew

was Scott's "Dies Irae".<sup>1</sup> Roundell Palmer left it out of his collection, and Gladstone remonstrated. R. P. defended himself on the ground that it was a translation, which, said Gladstone, was absurd—both started from the same point, but that was all.

Gladstone had read Watson's poem on Tennyson, a magnificent and noble poem. Had also read Watson's other poems, but he ought to discard his early efforts as unworthy, as Tennyson did. And that reminded him of an interesting reminiscence. He enjoyed the honour of Wordsworth's friendship, and W. used to dine with him sometimes at the Albany, and he distinctly remembered W. disparaging Tennyson. But he left the Albany in 1837; therefore Wordsworth can only have known Tennyson's earliest poems, most of which he afterwards discarded as unworthy of him.

The thing Gladstone was proudest of in his country was its wealth of poetry—still splendid fruitage from a tree 500 years old.

Re "Rock of Ages", he had gone through all Toplady's, but had only found four other good lines, which he recited very finely (about fearing to live and die: 211 in Palgrave's *Sacred Treasury*). He had preserved a newspaper cutting about local enquiries by a Topladyite, eliciting only that T. used to walk about in the woods at night singing. Charles Wesley very much overrated, and he wrote more than Homer—7000 hymns of, say, thirty lines—"Do the sum, gentlemen, and be appalled".

G. talked to me before dinner about "P.M.G." Was very glad to hear my staff was coming over. "I have not troubled much", he said, "to look at the 'P.M.G.' lately".

G.O.M. talked of newspaper vulgarisms—"lengthened", "transpired", etc.—how John Bright was a great guardian of English (also absurdly appreciative of Whittier, whereupon Russell recited "Barbara F. (Frietchie)", G.O.M. listening with head down and very sweet expression—"very fine", "very fine") and John Morley now.

G.O.M. went off alone, as before, early, not saying good-bye to

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<sup>1</sup> *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto vi. No reference is made here to Newman's hymn, "Praise to the Holiest", which was a great favourite with Gladstone. At the time of the Dulcigno demonstration in the autumn of 1880 he wrote to Mrs. Gladstone: "Dearest Catherine, 'Praise to the Holiest', etc.: the Sultan has surrendered".

Acton. He always gives his friends the slip thus—even his sons, said Acton—so as to walk home alone.

Cook's visits to Lord Rosebery now become frequent and contribute largely to the Diary. The noble lord seemed to rely increasingly on his friend's judgment. He told Newnes, who was "hugely pleased", that Cook was "the only person connected with the Press who had his confidence". The Diary affords a vivid portrait of this wayward, brilliant and magnetic personality.

Mr. (afterwards Lord) Bryce also appears frequently on the scene. He gave Cook much advice about the coming new journal. He agreed that independent support, the sort which the *Pall Mall* had constantly supplied, was the best. But, he said, "it is only human nature to say anybody can support us when right: we want somebody to do so when wrong". Cook reminded Mr. Bryce of Lord Salisbury's remark to a Conservative editor: "I'll do anything I can for you, if only you won't support us". No one could ever accuse Cook, however great his respect for party institutions, of an excessive and obsequious partnership. He always reserved a right of private and independent judgment.

The first number of the new paper was to appear on the opening day of the new Parliament, January 31, 1893. A new daily requires a vast amount of organization. The time was short, but Newnes and Cook in collaboration were "a perfect strength". The form or ground-plan of the paper had been already determined. The new journal was to be modelled exactly on the *Pall Mall*, just as the *Pall Mall* was modelled roughly on the old *Anti-Jacobin*. But an early and very important question was that of a title. An object becomes in time so identified with its name and the name becomes so steeped in the attributes of the object that the two seem to have been inevitably associated.

We can scarcely imagine the *Westminster Gazette* bearing any other name. Yet it might well have borne any one of a score of others. Cook's friends were prolific of suggestion. It is not recorded who first suggested *Westminster Gazette*. It was the earliest idea to which a return was made after the rejection of many others. Lord Rosebery suggested *The Thames*, which was voted "too muddy". I think it was George Meredith who proposed the *P.M.* with its double significance, temporal and political. A very strong claimant was *The Strand*, but Mr. Newnes had already annexed this for a popular magazine. Among other suggestions were *The Torch*, *The New Gazette*, *The Clock*, *The Argus*, *The Beacon*, *The Pilot*, *The Tribune*, *The Forum*, *The Night Mail*, *The St. Paul's Gazette*, *The Patriot*, *The Moment*, *The Messenger*, *The Charing Cross Gazette*, *The Sun*—the list is almost interminable.

*Westminster Gazette* was certainly a happy christening. As Mr. Reginald Brett (afterwards Lord Esher) wrote to Cook, it was "solid, respectable, unflippant, easy to say, commonplace, bourgeois, in short, everything it ought to be". So this problem was happily settled.

But whence and wherefore the greenness of the *Westminster*? Many scientific reasons were given for clothing the paper in "the tint of the fields, the trees and the billiard-table", as the first issue of the paper expressed it. One oculist had said that green was the most restful to the eye, and a spectacle-maker thought that the change would take away a large part of his business. All this may have been true, but the "green thought" was not originally due to any such technical considerations. Mr. George Newnes wished to give the newcomer a striking début, and to differentiate it from the two other evening gazettes then in the field. So he decided to print on green paper, and the scientific case for the

decision was secondary and subsequent. The readers' opinions were amusingly various. Sir Algernon West wrote from Downing Street: "I fear I cannot say that Mr. Gladstone likes your green colour—he says what he suffers from in reading is want of light, and the violent contrast between black and white suits him best". Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who writes Cook a voluminous letter, tells him: "In good light your colour is first-rate. In a railway carriage in the evening it would make the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes publicly damn his eyes". But other verdicts were quite the reverse, and the *Westminster* retained a colour which at first exercised London and other wits, but, one must allow, to no very high flights of humour. Some one dubbed it "the sea-green incorruptible", and Mr. (afterwards Sir) Herbert Warren wrote from Magdalen College, Oxford, that he flattered himself he guessed the real reason for the colour of the paper: "Because you wished its political hue to be complementary to the Reds".

The *Westminster Gazette* only appeared on January 31, though it had to be printed on the machines of the *Daily Chronicle*, and the familiar building in Tudor Street was hardly as yet above ground. The first number bears unquestionable traces of the difficulty of production. Mr. Harry Cust, then editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, writes to Cook on February 1: "I congratulate you very sincerely on your to-day's issue. Yesterday I was relieved: not so this afternoon". Yet Number One contained much that was interesting. In the leading article, "New and Old", Cook deals with the ethical question which had been so much debated on the sale of the *Pall Mall*:

From one point of view the purchase of a newspaper is no more of public importance or concern than the purchase of any other form of private property. Legally, a newspaper pro-



prietor has as much right to part with his paper as another man to sell his stud, and the outside public has no better warrant to pass judgment on the buying and selling in one transaction than in the other. But, morally, there is a wide and obvious difference. The very phrase, "the public Press", suggests the nature of it. For good or evil, the Press is every day gaining greater power. Every day it claims to speak with higher authority; every day it finds, or reflects, the thoughts of a wider public. Such influence would be in the highest degree dangerous, such claims in the highest degree absurd, unless the power of the Press got in the minds alike of writer and proprietors a strong sense of public responsibility, a firm recognition of public duty. How ridiculous, for instance, becomes the assumption of the editorial "we", when a journal which for years has been advocating one policy begins some fine day—without any word of explanation or hint of substituted personality—to advocate the opposite; and when this stultification takes place, not as the result of any change of opinion, but as the journalistic equivalent for a transfer of gold. The evils of a venal Press are not limited to the grosser abuses revealed in the Panama scandals. The dignity of journalism as a profession, the seriousness of journalism as an influence, would no less be impaired if the transfer of a paper could avail either to convert hireling pens or to snuff out a public organ. It is for this reason that we venture to claim for the reappearance of the old *Pall Mall Gazette*, under the title of the *Westminster Gazette*, the sympathy of all who are disposed to take journalism seriously. Those within the profession needed no fresh assurance: but to some others the first number of the *Westminster Gazette* will come as a useful demonstration of the fact that a newspaper, if it may be sold, cannot be bought; and that though a political organ may be silenced for a while, there is enough public spirit to ensure for it a speedy reincarnation.

The editor then proceeds to lay down the general lines of future policy:

We stand where we stood before, having changed our abode, not our minds; and begin again where we left off—with quite curious exactness, as the fortunes of politics and the virtues of Her Majesty's Ministers have ordained. The *Pall Mall Gazette*

was one of the earliest advocates of Home Rule ; it was a Home Ruler, indeed, even before Mr. Chamberlain. But the Home Rule for which, until last October, it never ceased to plead, was Home Rule on non-separatist lines. And the first duty of the *Westminster Gazette* will be, we do not doubt, to support a Home Rule Bill in which the unity of the Kingdom and the sovereignty of Parliament are preserved by the retention of the Irish members. Home Rule for Ireland, we have always urged, should be regarded from the point of view of a possible Federation of the Empire. The maintenance of closer union of the Empire should in its turn be the governing idea in our foreign policy—a policy for which common ground has now been found between the renunciation of Jingoism by Lord Salisbury and of Little Englandism by the Liberals. The continuity of foreign policy, advocated for many years in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, has thus become possible ; and here in the *Westminster* we are not too late to congratulate Lord Rosebery on the signal proof he has afforded that the change of Government at home means no weakening of England's policy abroad. The retention of free markets and the provision of future breathing-spaces, which are now among the first essentials of England's Foreign Policy, stand in vital relation to " the condition of England question " at home. It was a saying of Cavour that " in whatever country, or in whatever social condition thou art placed, it is with the oppressed that thou should'st live " ; and to the like effect Mr. Morley " has counted that day ill-spent in which some thought had not been given to the problem of the poor ". The *Westminster Gazette* will not forget the aphorism of the old editor of the *Pall Mall*. But indeed the claims of Labour are now so loudly vocal that every man must listen, whether he will or no ; and the temptation against which a political editor has now to contend in relation to the working classes is not so much to turn a deaf ear as to play the demagogue to them.

Finally the reader is assured that the support of the *Westminster Gazette* accorded to the new Government will be independent ; " for no other kind of support is possible to an honest man, or acceptable to a wise one ".

This characteristic article, read with interest and profit by many who took home the first *Westminster*

*Gazette* on the evening of January 31, was followed in the same issue by a series of "welcomes" from political leaders. Mr. Gladstone's contribution runs :

Both on general grounds and from my lively recollection of you as editor of the "P.M.G.", I have truly desired to meet your wishes for some sort of literary or political contribution. But I have thought and thought and consulted the oracle within, which has made no response. From out of the silent cave I am obliged to answer, it is beyond my power. I have nothing but my heartiest good wishes to offer, combining with them the further wish that I had any means of showing how hearty they are.

I stand upon a ledge which just gives me standing-ground to resist old editors and friends. Were I to give way but once and write, I should have given way in all.

Others follow from Sir William Harcourt, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry Fowler.

The general contents are varied enough. There is a long article on "A Day in the Life of a Cabinet Minister"; the first instalment of a novel, *The Dictator*, by Mr. J. M'Carthy; a sketch of Mr. M'Carthy, by T. P. O'Connor; "Reminiscences by a Doorkeeper of the House of Commons", and a set of very brilliant verses by F. E. Garrett, entitled "Athanasius up to Auction", and touching satirically through nearly twenty stanzas on the sale of the "P.M.G." Here the two first verses must suffice :

Come gentlemen ! what offers ? I am authorized to sell

Without reserve, each stick and stock that can be sold or bought,  
That valuable property which is known as the *Pall Mall* :

Name, fame, and all the fittings of a "Medium of Thought".

The Staff, sir ? No, the Staff, ahem ! together with a few

Small matters (you remind me of a detail I forgot)—

A few small matters of ideas that appertain thereto

Is not included in this unexceptionable lot.

Cook received a good deal of advice from his friends on the conduct of the new paper. He was far too modest

and free from conceit to treat such suggestions lightly, but I could never help feeling that in all such matters he was his own wisest counsellor. Sir George Newnes's confidence in Cook was unreserved. "I do hope", he wrote just before the first number was published, "the great amount of work you have done in the business part has not interfered with your editorial work. As matters may arise on the eve of publication which may require immediate decision, please remember that you have absolute discretion in my absence to do what you think best and I shall approve".

I do not know how far Cook was tempted into wilder courses by a paragraph in the afore-mentioned letter from Mr. Bernard Shaw. "Blessed is he", says a character in Shakespeare, "who heareth his own detraction and putteth himself to amendment", but it is hard to imagine Cook amending himself on these lines :

Get rid of the infernal friendly terms you are now on with everybody. Everybody says you are a very nice fellow. They always said that Stead was the damndest liar, scoundrel and hypocrite in England. Until at least a thousand men turn white with rage and hatred whenever your name is mentioned, I shall not believe in you a bit as an editor. Who on earth will buy the paper to see what you say about this or that measure when they know beforehand that you won't say anything that could embarrass the Government or hurt any one's feelings? You have a tremendous chance. And you are throwing it away because you wish to behave like a gentleman.

Amidst these converging counsels Cook held his own course. He was not "a sophist who has no wisdom for himself". He made of the *Westminster Gazette* the sort of paper he approved. He himself remarks in his *Life of Delane* that "the best part of the life-work of a conscientious and indefatigable editor is contained in the files of the paper which he edited". The files of the

*Westminster* for the three years of Cook's rule faithfully reflect the attributes of the editor. One is especially struck with the unchanging ground-plan. The first page contains the leading article and the beginning of the special article. Underneath both at the foot of the page run the paragraphs of "Our London Letter". On the second page the special article is continued; then come the characteristic "Notes of the Day", and generally some correspondence. The rest of the paper is open to more modification, but the general aspect of the sheet shows little or no change from the first to the last number of Cook's régime. The only outward development seems to be Mr. Gould's promotion from the illustration on a small scale of the parliamentary notes to the greater prominence of "the cartoon of the day" which soon became one of the most attractive features of the paper.

The *Westminster* under Cook was free from those shocks and sensations which had marked the old *Pall Mall*. In its equableness, its statesmanlike tone, the variety of its interests, its impartial devotion to politics, literature and art, its high moral and literary standard, the paper was essentially E. T. Cook's. The impression that a paper so tempered must have been dull is quite mistaken. The old *Manchester Examiner*, which perished before the era of what is known as "the new journalism," was not dull, for it was written by really brilliant persons. A journal on which Cook, J. A. Spender, Garrett and F. C. Gould collaborated was not likely to be too ponderous. Stupidity is the really dull thing, and genius will produce what is interesting under whatever forms and conditions it works. It is quite a delusion that the commercial spirit which transformed journalism "from a profession to a business" gave us interesting papers in place of dull ones. It may be doubted on the whole whether London was ever provided with a better, wiser

and at the same time a more brilliant and attractive paper than was the *Westminster Gazette* under Cook's editorship.

That editorship covered the whole period of the 1892-1895 Liberal Government, a triennium which earned a bad eminence as one of the most turbulent and undignified in our parliamentary history. To the second Home Rule Bill, as it did not offend on the subject of Irish representation at Westminster, the *Gazette* of that ilk was able to give its full support. But that measure was as unsavable as the attempt to raise a popular cry against the House of Lords for destroying it was hopeless. Cook must have known—and he had always a faithful friend, Admiral Maxse, to remind him—that the Liberal party was then compassing its own ruin by a policy which in the main only the personal prestige of the Grand Old Man commended even to a minority of the voters.

Then followed Mr. Gladstone's resignation and the social and political agonies of the successorship. Mr. Gladstone's remark in 1886 at Manchester had been interpreted as promising the reversion of the leadership to his brilliant young friend and follower. "Lord Rosebery", he said, "is the man of whom you will hear even more than you have heard, and in him the Liberal party of this country see the man of the future". And he went on to say that "he did not speak without reflection, for if he said it lightly he would be doing injustice not less to Lord Rosebery than to them". Almost certainly no such definite intention was present, and it is probable that Mr. Gladstone in 1894 made no recommendation of Lord Rosebery to the Queen, indeed made no recommendation at all, and was in fact disposed to favour the claims of Lord Spencer or even of Mr. Asquith.

The one politician, whose claims from some points

of view might have seemed the strongest, Sir William Harcourt, was scarcely in the running. Hence many tears and the beginnings of that new tabernacular division in the Liberal party which advanced to an acute stage over the Boer War and was at last temporarily healed when the Imperialists of the Liberal League took office in 1906 under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—only to be followed in the course of years by another violent schism between the Coalition and the Independent Liberals. It is always difficult to determine what is the *semper eadem* of Liberal doctrine, and which section at these times of division is orthodox and which heretical. During this long antagonism between the Imperialists and the Little Englanders both claimed to represent "the main stream of Liberalism". There can be no doubt at any rate that Rosebery stood for a spirited and patriotic foreign policy, and for a very sympathetic attitude to our "free, tolerant and un-aggressive Empire", and as such he had the hearty support of his personal and political friend, the editor of the *Westminster Gazette*. Probably it was a disadvantage that the Prime Minister should sit in the House of Lords. "As, however", wrote the *Westminster*, "Lord Rosebery has for many years been an advocate for ending, under the guise of mending, it would surely be cruel on the part of any of our Radical incorruptibles to visit this accident of birth upon him", an accident, we are told, "which probably nobody regrets more heartily than Lord Rosebery himself". Lord Rosebery inspired confidence in all parties by the "elevated and patriotic strain in his political equipment". At the same time, it is drily added, "his convictions on the greatness of the Empire and his conceptions for its future consolidation are under no danger of suffering from want of opposition to stimulate them". There was a popular and not wholly

unjustified impression that the Liberal party was incapable of conducting the foreign affairs of the country. Lord Rosebery's conduct at the Foreign Office in connection with Egypt, Uganda and other regions had tended to correct this impression. "Lord Rosebery", said the *Westminster*, "may place Liberalism definitely on a Big England basis and thereby win back many who have been alienated rightly or wrongly by their distrust of Mr. Gladstone's foreign and colonial policy". One's attention is caught by a clever sketch of this baffling personality :

A strong Radical who nevertheless is not unfavourably regarded by the stern unbending Tories ; a Home Ruler who is half trusted by the Unionists ; a socialistic politician who is related to the Rothschilds ; a political reformer who commands in equal measure the confidence of the extremists and the moderates ; a man of the world in the widest sense, whose personal friendships include the Heir Apparent to the throne and the leaders of the new democracy—did ever a Prime Minister stand at the outset of his career in so remarkable a position ?

A story told in Cook's Diaries illustrates the social agonies which follow in the wake of political events. A dinner was given at York House on the day on which Lord Rosebery became Prime Minister. One might have imagined that the unlikeliest guests on that occasion would be Sir William and Lady Harcourt, but there they were with Mr. Gladstone, and by another stroke of ironical, though probably unintentional humour, Lord Rosebery had to take in Lady Harcourt. It is not surprising to hear that she would not speak a word, and that the royal host "often chuckled" at the memory of that dinner.

Another very disturbing event which fell just within Cook's term at the *Westminster* was the Jameson Raid. Cook was distinguished among editors, and also among



Englishmen, for an accurate understanding of South Africa's "tangled politics". This interest, which was afterwards strengthened and made more intimate by the removal of his two greatest friends, Edmund Garrett and Alfred Milner, to the South African scene, seems to have brought Cook under some suspicion of being identified with what was called vaguely and vituperatively the "Rhodesian gang". Cook's taste for South African politics was purely political, tinged perhaps with a certain romantic admiration for Rhodes, Jameson and the others who were "blazing a trail" for British influence in those vast spaces of the sub-continent.

The writer has heard that the only real difference between Cook and his assistant, Mr. J. A. Spender, arose over these South African questions. Cook was thought to have been too apologetic about the Raid and not quick enough to denounce that relapse into the methods of Drake and the conquistadores. Cook, it is true, insisted on suspending his judgment until he had ascertained the real facts. But his opinion, in the absence of any justification, was unmistakable and expressed in plain and strong language. "If no explanation is forthcoming", said the *Westminster* of January 6, 1896, "it was the action, not merely of an unscrupulous freebooter, but of an utter madman". "Whatever his motive may have been, Dr. Jameson in the actual result inflicted a most serious blow on British interests in South Africa (to say nothing of its effects on those interests elsewhere). It was calculated to put the clock back and to retard perhaps by years the consummation it was meant to hasten. The union of Dutch and English under a common flag: that is the ultimate goal to which things were being ordered in South Africa".

Cook's social engagements became rather crowded

at this period, and he has duly recorded in his Diary what he saw and heard in salon and mansion.

His Diary for March 18 is occupied with a visit to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Rosebery, at the Durdans, when he again met Mr. Gladstone, who was still Prime Minister :

Arrived about six (Saturday). Had tea with Rosebery, talked Westminster, Khedive, etc. Then he went off to his boxes, leaving me to "browse". The whole length of the house is library, in compartments, with lounge chairs, etc., and French windows opening on to verandah and garden. Very readable collection of books in all kinds, mostly bound. Noticed that R. makes little indexes, like mine, only at the beginning instead of the end.

Birrell arrived from town. Dinner at eight, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone then first appearing, Mrs. Gladstone hurrying after him with shawls and comforters. "Oh, he's very naughty. He would go out to dinner at Ferdinand de Rothschild's, and we had already put off a lunch next day at Sir J. Paget's to meet Virchow and ever so many doctors".

Small round table. I sat next to Mr. Gladstone, who was full of Pearson's book,<sup>1</sup> with which I alone had even a nodding acquaintance through review in *Westminster Gazette*. Talked of Tennyson and Browning, and told again his story of the last time he saw Tennyson. Birrell said his wife (widow of Lionel Tennyson) had presentation copies given by Browning to Tennyson, but none of them cut. Birrell said they were keeping them so.

Rosebery saying something about the "Queen" and "lively", Gladstone, not quite hearing, said, "What's that, Rosebery? You found the Queen's table lively? Then you had a very fortunate experience".

Discussed Kimberley, Rosebery saying how loquacious he was and all about himself—sort of "Every day, sir, I drink so much malt liquor". Gladstone said, "Well, he has one great gift as Minister—a very rare one—he writes the shortest minutes and memorandums I know, and yet leaves nothing material out".

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<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Pearson, *National Life and Character*.

Curious how Gladstone flashed up whenever Ireland<sup>1</sup> came on. Told an excellent story of an Orangeman who was an evil liver, and in the last ministrations performed the religious exercise of saying "Damn the Pope".

Servants came in in the middle of this and Mr. Gladstone turned the subject till they had gone.

"He wouldn't have said that 'damn' ten years ago", said Rosebery afterwards.

In drawing-room after dinner Gladstone went on talking without stopping till sent to bed by Mrs. G. at eleven. Told how Lord Brougham had said to Lord Aberdeen, "They say we are the two ugliest men going", and Aberdeen didn't like it. G. held forth in defence of his saying in first reading speech (criticized in *Spectator*) that there had been no great Irishmen since the Union, except among Nationalists, or in professions where special training came in, and Trinity College, Dublin. Rosebery stood up to him and argued him down, not quite to his liking. G. maintained you can't take nationality out of a man without impoverishing him.

After eleven, Rosebery, Birrell, and I sat up for an hour smoking. Going upstairs later we stopped at sporting pictures, which line the rooms, stairs, etc. Said he had begun collecting when he was keen on the turf, and then felt it a point of honour to make his collection complete. But was now afraid lest his boys should get love of turf, which was the last thing in the world he wanted.

Breakfast next morning. I sat next to G.O.M. Talked about Pearson's book, Stead, and Balfour and bimetallism. Went to church, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone in brougham. Birrell had walked on with Munro-Ferguson, who came down for breakfast. G.O.M. knelt right down and listened with hand to ear all through. Parson gave out notice about petition against Welsh Church Suspension Bill.<sup>2</sup> "Lucky it wasn't Sunday before", said R., "as the sermon was a scorcher". R. and G. walked on ahead. After church walked home, giving Mrs. Gladstone my arm. Accosted (in pseudo-character of Herbert Gladstone) by a young fellow who wanted to know if Mr. Gladstone would

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<sup>1</sup> The second Home Rule Bill was defeated in the Lords in September of this year (1893).

<sup>2</sup> This had been introduced into Parliament by Mr. Asquith.

shake his wife's hand, as she was the grand-daughter of E. Miall.<sup>1</sup> I repeated this to Mrs. Gladstone, who said, "No: so many grand-daughters". I said how well Mr. G. seemed. She said his cold hadn't been much, but she was always glad of an excuse for keeping him quiet.

Mr. and Mrs. G. went upstairs. Rosebery reappeared in riding breeches, and said to Birrell and me that he would as soon we did not tell Mr. G. what he was up to. I strolled about in the grounds with Campbell-Bannerman, who had come down in the morning. Talked about the House of Commons. (R. said of C.-B. he might almost do anything if he had ambition to, but apparently he hadn't.)

At lunch G.O.M. talked a lot about economy and Joseph Hume. C.-B. told stories of the extravagance of the Irish Government—each successive Irish Secretary left fresh greenhouses. Whoever was there in fruit season got it. He went on to same effect about Lords of the Admiralty, even Spencer<sup>2</sup> enjoying a Mediterranean trip at the country's expense.

After lunch R., C.-B., Birrell, Munro-Ferguson, Waterfield,<sup>3</sup> and I walked round the course. R. said he had had to buy ground opposite the paddock for fear of their making a new one there and so his losing rent for present one.

A few days later Cook dines with Gladstone at Downing Street with Lady Frederick Cavendish and others.

"The dining-room", he notes, "adjoins the drawing-room with a room adjoining that, out of which G.O.M. came. Pretty to see him, Mrs. G. and Helen G. whispering and fussing about as to who was to sit where. Mrs. G. talked to me about our visit to Rosebery, said she was determined Home Rule majority should be 36, and 'we are resolved to make every sacrifice to get it through this session'.

"G.O.M. talked away incessantly about 'bus horses. He had studied them carefully for years—convinced their lot was not a bad one. Tram horses very different.

"Pearson's book again—a book every one should read who

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<sup>1</sup> A well-known political Nonconformist.

<sup>2</sup> First Lord of the Admiralty.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Rosebery's private secretary.

was concerned or interested in public affairs'. 'But very pessimistic, isn't it?' said Carvell Williams.<sup>1</sup> 'No, I shouldn't say that. I think, don't you, Mr. Cook, that our friend Pearson opens out his questions very fairly?' The book would only disappoint the very sanguine believers in progress, but I have never been one of them, never'".

Cook's Diary in these years is crowded with précis of conversations at political symposia. The entry for April 19 reads:

Dined at House of Commons with Curzon. Sat between Balfour and Birrell. Also Cust, Iwan-Müller,<sup>2</sup> A. Hardinge and Asquith. Nearly all "Arthured" and "Georged" and "Harryed". Birrell led conversation to eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on which Balfour cordially agreed. Balfour very fascinating manners. Talked about Randy,<sup>3</sup> everybody having had a row with him. Balfour said he was the best conversationalist he knew, better even than Rosebery, not so forced. Said W. E. G. and Chamberlain easily best speakers in the House of Commons—all lawyers bad speakers.

Cook's advice on political principle and policy was becoming more and more highly appreciated. He was continually consulted by Lord Rosebery. "I had the greatest respect and friendship for your brother", wrote his lordship in 1920 to Mr. A. M. Cook. "He had the best political judgment that I can remember. He was indeed singularly gifted and a delightful friend". On one occasion in June 1895 Cook had failed to call on Lord Rosebery and received a telegram. "You didn't come", said Lord Rosebery on his arrival; "it was like missing the morning sun".

The last time Cook met Mr. Gladstone was in December 1895 when the aged statesman (he was now

<sup>1</sup> A strong political dissenter.

<sup>2</sup> E. B. Iwan-Müller of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, author of *Lord Milner and South Africa* and other brilliant political works.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Randolph Churchill.

eighty-six) had retired from active political life. Cook was invited to Hawarden Castle, the scene of so many pilgrimages from the neighbouring centres of population. He writes :

Got to Sandycroft about six and drove in a trap ordered from Glynne Arms to the Castle. Was received in the drawing-room by Helen, Henry and Mrs. Gladstone. Then after a few minutes was taken into Mr. G.'s library. He was lying up in a corner on a sofa reading with a candle lamp on the table Hogg's *De Quincey and his Friends*. Henry G. sat through the conversation, saying to me afterwards he had seized the opportunity to hear his father talk and hoped he hadn't got off the subject of Armenia too soon. We talked for about one hour and a quarter, it being time at the end to dress for dinner, Mr. G. saying, "Will you please remember that we mustn't resume any of these topics at dinner. We must only talk about the weather or your work. I suppose you have a large staff, but there we will leave that".

Cook has preserved the gist of this hour and a quarter's conversation which turned mainly on the then burning questions of Venezuela and Armenia. Gladstone did a little thinking aloud about the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury :

He is a man of very great powers, very remarkable parts, but, as I think you said in your paper, he was a *Saturday Reviewer*, and what a training for a politician !<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury's writing was, however, entirely honourable to him—it was to support his family, for his father behaved very badly to him. A man of great parts, but his tongue is not under control : it runs away with him.

I talked of Salisbury's unique position. This launched him on to the inadvisability of the Prime Minister being Foreign Secretary—"one of the many constitutional changes which the so-called constitutional party have made and one of the worst. All Foreign Secretaries, Clarendon, etc., consulted with the Prime Minister, which, when they (Ministers) are all in town (as of

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<sup>1</sup> This recalls a summary of the whole duty of man once current in Lancashire in those days—"Fear God and hate the *Saturday Review*".

course they ought to be except in very easy times) is a very valuable thing—securing two opinions. Every Cabinet Minister again, except a few who are under the Treasury, has the right of bringing matters before the Cabinet, and not the least important thing in a discreet Minister is to know what matters thus to bring. But the P.M. also has the right of bringing any matter. All these checks are gone. And again I regard the Court as a most valuable check in foreign policy, but with a Court which has removed from London to Windsor, from Windsor to Osborne, from Osborne to Balmoral, from Balmoral to Europe, you can guess what has become of that". He said the Foreign Secretary used to see the P.M. every day—very valuable, because Cabinet consultation was not easy when there were twelve and altogether impossible when there were twenty.

I said I supposed there never was such a Dictator as Salisbury. "And at one time," said the G.O.M. with a chuckle, "he used to inveigh against the dictatorship of another Minister.

"Lord Beaconsfield's influence on Lord Salisbury was bad and he conquered him entirely, after, what was more, the greatest insults ever levelled at a colleague—'the master of flouts and jeers and—I forget what was the third'".<sup>1</sup>

At dinner Gladstone talked a good deal about London in old times. He remembered when Atkinson's shop in Bond Street was a studio, believed it used to be Sir T. Lawrence's. Growth of 'buses—when they were at Dollis Hill he used to amuse himself with counting 'buses that passed. The number increased from sixty to eighty. "Yes", chimed in Mrs. Gladstone to me, "it used to be quite a game with us to count the 'buses". London Hotels—enormous growth, much show and splendour, but no comfort—the comfortable English family hotel gone.

Asked a lot about my work. Did I walk to my office? "Yes, reading *The Times*". "And what oculist do you mean to employ?" About the green *Westminster*—green certainly better than pink, which is very bad. Pink telegrams ought to be stopped. Telegram writing, meant to be specially legible, was not. The secret of clear writing was white space between.

Manager came at dinner from Pulitzer, whom they call Pilsener,

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<sup>1</sup> "Gibes". Disraeli also told Lord Cranborne that his invective lacked "finish".

asking for message to American people. Unlimited reply prepaid. G.O.M. said he had already sent same message twice, viz. "Dare not interfere—only common-sense needed".

He (Gladstone) ate a good plain dinner, with a rice pudding of his own; two glasses of claret and two of port wine. Asked if I took sherry: "We are not sherry drinkers—take fire and water and that is sherry." Often he sat rather silent; his hearing is bad, and sight, except for reading, has to be screwed up.

When the ladies went, he sat next to me and talked *inter alia* about Stead—"a most extraordinary man, but so vain. A friend of his went to see him in gaol. He said, 'There's only one man in England able to take decisions and with initiative, and that is the occupant of this cell' ". I talked of Stead's spooks. He said he had come across most things in his life, but the spiritists were one of the few sets of people he had never had much to do with. He objected to their title "spiritualists". That ought to be a sacred word: he always called them "spiritists". Reverting to Stead, I said he was a splendid fellow to work with and a very clever political writer. Didn't he think so? "Clever—yes, as clever as the devil. A very nasty customer to deal with is Stead. I remember a colleague saying, I think during the 1880 Government, 'No need to look at the Opposition papers: all our own are in opposition'. Stead was a very decent fellow indeed when he had his little paper in the North, but London turned his head".

I told the story of the Tennyson script (spook-writing) and Brett's remark to Stead: "It's curious that Tennyson who would not communicate with you when alive, at once selected you as his medium when he was dead". He was much amused and chuckled: "Lord Tennyson showed a most wise discretion in postponing the acquaintance to the other world". He said about spooks that he had never gone into the subject, but that the denial *a priori* and refusal to examine seemed to him very unscientific.

After dinner he played backgammon in the drawing-room with Miss Phillimore, one or other daughter and son looking on—he rather arch, they cracking family jokes ("Sometimes," said Henry G. afterwards, "he will go on telling stories by the yard, but this evening he wouldn't draw")—a very pretty scene. I talked



to Mrs. H. Gladstone, Mrs. Drew and Mrs. Gladstone. The last talked about Parnell—"so taking but so wicked"—and Rosebery, and showed me the first portrait of her husband—"isn't it a big head?" She was knitting without glasses, but for the last half hour was made to lie down on the sofa—"see how badly they treat me", she said to me.

When the ladies went G.O.M. stayed up talking with me a little longer—"for I don't appear early in the morning now", he said. I asked if he had seen any of the Irish lately. "Oh no, I see nobody here political at all". I made some remark about it's being hard to help those who won't help themselves. "Ah", he said, "it's much worse than that. They hinder. I have always believed that the wretched Parnell business made the difference between a majority of 40 and 70 or 80, and that made all the difference". I talked of Mr. Chamberlain's colonial schemes. He smiled contemptuously and said, "Most mischievous. The last of that business went with the preferential wine duties—most wasteful and demoralizing".

About his *Butler* he said he had only one more batch of proofs to pass. The thing he attached most value to was splitting him up into short paragraphs with marginal summaries for facility of reference. He had corrected all the proofs himself and the Oxford printer had been down to see him: they were printing it beautifully.

When we left G.O.M. Henry G. and Drew took me to a little den where we smoked and whiskied. This, H. G. said, was a comparatively recent concession, as Mr. G. hated smoking. I asked him if he knew how "P.M.G." got hold of G.'s resignation. He said, "Not a bit—probably from some open door and through Mr. G.'s deafness". The butler whom they had at the time had to be dismissed for other reasons afterwards. He said Mr. G.'s letters and papers were all in the most perfect order, including 500 letters from the Queen. Twenty-five from Tennyson were looked out the other day.

At breakfast (nine o'clock) Mrs. Drew opened all his letters, putting about half in the waste-paper basket—requests for autographs, for details about his biography, for opinions on everything. Afterwards Mr. and Mrs. H. G. took me through the Park to St. Deiniol's—very prettily undulating park with splendid

trees. One great beech was pointed out to me as much admired by Ruskin. Drew took me over library and hostel. Every corner of space in library very cleverly utilized, all measured and planned by Mr. Gladstone himself, who also framed all the divisions and sub-divisions and placed most of the books on step-ladders himself.

On return read papers. G. reads *Westminster Gazette* and *Manchester Guardian* himself in morning and only sees London morning papers, or has extracts, over tea in the afternoon. Left about twelve. Wrote my name in visitors' book. Parnell's the show signature, next to Margot's.<sup>1</sup> J. Morley about the most frequent of recent years; one large Irish deputation. Gladstone came down to the door with no hat or coat to see us off.

So ended Cook's last visit to the greatest, or at least the most famous, of Victorian statesmen.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Asquith

## CHAPTER IX

### THE “ DAILY NEWS ”

Κάρτιστοι μὲν ἔσαν καὶ καρτίστοις ἐμάχοντο. (“Great men they were and with great men they fought.”)—HOM. *Il.* i. 267.

EXACTLY three years after Cook had entered upon his editorship of the new-born *Westminster Gazette* he left it to become editor of the *Daily News*. He cannot have seriously doubted that Sir George Newnes would renew the contract at its expiration, though there is some evidence that that idea had occurred to Cook's mind. The *Westminster* had not yet become a gold-mine, but Newnes was well aware of Cook's value and the enormous services he had rendered in building up *ab initio* the high reputation which the newspaper had already attained. Cook had found Newnes a highly satisfactory proprietor who was content to reign as a constitutional monarch with as little interference as possible in the actual rule. Cook was perhaps rather too sensitive in this respect, and I have heard it said that Newnes scarcely ventured to approach his editor in the office lest he should be suspected of a desire to interfere. “I don't dare to show my nose in my own offices of the *Westminster Gazette*”, he is reported to have said: “and why?—because of E. T. Cook”. Cook wrote to Sir George Newnes on the day of his migration:

“WESTMINSTER GAZETTE,”  
TUDOR STREET, E.C.,  
January 30, 1896.

The paper of this day's issue is now out, completing the third year of the issue and I am about to leave the office. I cannot do so without taking the liberty of again expressing to you my sincere gratitude for the unfailing support you have accorded to me. And not to me only but—what is much more important—to all such of the old *Pall Mall* staff as found a new home on the *Westminster*. Your stepping into the breach three years ago, and the free hand you have ever since given me to carry on the traditions of the old paper under a new name, have constituted (if I may venture to say so) a very high service to the cause of political journalism, and entitle you to gratitude from the profession, which I shall never cease to feel.

The early years of a political journal are always very uphill work, and in this case circumstances of uncommercial competition have erected an additional obstacle. And I can lay claim to nothing except having striven, to the best of my ability, to give the paper a position of credit and respect. I sincerely hope, and find much reason for believing, that the future career of the *Westminster* will be far more satisfactory. I feel sure that the happy arrangement you have made for the co-operation of Mr. Spender and Mr. Gould will start this second epoch under the best possible auspices.

To this Sir George Newnes replied :

February 1, 1896.

I reciprocate the sentiments you have expressed in your letter. Our relations in regard to the *Westminster* have been of a very agreeable character and I much regret your leaving. During the three years you have worked in a thorough and conscientious manner, and I wish to give unstinted testimony to the great ability you have displayed. I heartily wish you every success in your future career and hope you will always keep a kind thought for the paper and the associations you have just left.

Thus there was no odour of the fires of martyrdom about Cook's demise on the *Westminster Gazette*. Many

were the applications for the vacant chair, some rather surprising ones from persons of political distinction. But the predestined successor was evidently Mr. Cook's assistant, Mr. J. A. Spender. It is interesting to find Sir George Newnes informing Mr. Cook that though he had considered the editorials the strongest part of the *Westminster Gazette*, he should not rely so much on them in future. As a matter of fact, Sir George was appointing a man who of all others was best qualified to carry forward the paper's high repute in this department. The *Westminster*, perhaps more than any other paper, has lived on its editorials, those singularly wise, moderate, highly-toned comments and counsels on public affairs which Mr. J. A. Spender has daily published *urbi et orbi* for nearly a quarter of a century. To his departing chief Mr. Spender writes :

February 4, 1896.

Many thanks for your letter. I sent it round the office to-day and I am sure it gave pleasure. I on my side have not said the half of what I mean and feel about the dissolution of our partnership. I really can hardly believe it to be a fact, and I seem to look forward to a few weeks when you will come back from a holiday.

How much I owe to you for teaching me my business these last few years no one knows so well as myself. It has been the best and happiest time of my life, and I can never forget in how many ways, as friend and chief, you have made life easy and pleasant for me. If all offices were as ours has been, journalism would be one of the smoothest professions in the world. Perhaps some day we may be thrown together again.

Mr. F. Carruthers Gould, the admirable cartoonist, wrote :

I cannot let you leave without trying to express to you my warmest thanks for your unvarying kindness and courtesy to me during the past years. I feel strongly that I owe a great deal to

your influence, and although I know quite well that you dislike "melted butter", I cannot refrain from telling you what a help your clear, logical and cultured view of things has been to me in my work. It is a keen regret I feel in losing your touch, but I am quite sure that the "continuity" which is so valuable will remain with Mr. Spender.

It is pleasant to note how invariably Cook enlisted the esteem and even the affection of those more mechanical workers who bear themselves a heavy responsibility for the success of a daily paper. Mr. John B. Boyle, Cook's printer, sends a very gratifying letter :

*September 3, 1896.*

My staff join me in very grateful thanks for your courtly, kindly letter. You do yourself an injustice, however, when you claim the responsibility for late editions. *You* have always been the ideal editor for punctuality and method, and personally I am very proud of having been your publisher for these past three years. I look forward with confidence to the time when you go to the other Westminster for which you are fated, where they burn the night lamp on the nation's deliberations.

Such were the halcyon calms which Cook relinquished for the broken and more perilous waters which now lay before him. From *Westminster Gazette* to *Daily News* in those days was professionally a promotion, and no doubt the higher dignity and responsibility of a great morning daily weighed with Cook in making his decision. The editor of a morning paper has in some ways a more difficult task than his confrère on an evening journal. The latter has the advantage of studying the comments of his morning contemporaries on the events of the day. It is indeed surprising how largely these morning papers, working independently, coincide in the comparative importance they attach to the various items of news they publish. It is not suggested that our chief evening papers are deficient in original leadership, but the

advantage just mentioned is a real one. But Cook was of all men least likely to follow in any obsequious sense and best qualified to lead.

The staff of a morning paper has other advantages not to be lightly esteemed. Mr. Leo Maxse, writing to congratulate his friend, remarked how glad he was that Cook "was to be relieved from his early morning drudgery and was to take it at the other end of the night, when a man has best command of his faculties". Cook had hitherto been engaged only in evening journalism. The change meant a great and, I think, a pleasant change in the disposition of life.

The *Daily News* was by this time an old and well-established paper, the chief organ of political non-conformity and of old-fashioned Liberalism of the Cobden type. Almost at the moment when Cook became its editor it was celebrating its jubilee, having been established just before the repeal of the Corn Laws. It is never forgotten in Bouverie Street that Charles Dickens was its original promoter.<sup>1</sup> There were circumstances, however, which tend to qualify the pride in this association. Dickens was the worst editor the paper ever had and certainly the shortest-lived. He occupied the chair for just twenty-six days, and even that short period, though regarded in the *Daily News* office as "a glorious chapter" in the journal's history, was to him only a regrettable incident. In the preface to the first book he published afterwards—the *Pictures from Italy*, which appeared first in the *Daily News* columns—he dismissed the journalistic episode as "a brief mistake he had made". No doubt, as Cook said, Dickens will be better known, and will rather live in history, as the creator of the *Eatanswill Gazette* than as the founder of the *Daily News*. He was succeeded by

<sup>1</sup> The *Pall Mall Gazette*, it will be remembered, had Thackerayan associations.

his friend, and future biographer, John Forster, and since then there had been many editors. Amongst these were Mr. Edward Dicey, C.B., and Mr. Henry Lucy, the latter being succeeded by Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Robinson, who had been literary manager since 1868 and was assisted in his editorial duties by Mr. P. W. Clayden, a "Little Englander" of a very pronounced type.

For an editor the character and disposition of his proprietors must always be crucial matters, for he has to live and work in immediate contact with them. Cook's new employers were Mr. Arnold Morley (late Postmaster-General), who was said to be mainly responsible for Cook's appointment, Mr. Henry Oppenheim, a practical and pleasant helper, Lord Ashton, a *novus homo* likewise of the old Radical school, Lord Brassey and Sir John Robinson himself. Cook's agreement was similar to that he had made with Sir George Newnes with the exception that the engagement was for two years certain (instead of three), after that period to be terminable at any time at six months' notice (instead of three) on either side. The proprietors had wished to qualify the editor's "full discretion" on policy and control by adding the words "subject to the general control of the proprietors", but they did not insist as further correspondence elicited an admission that the proprietors in great crises must decide the policy of the paper.

The staff which Cook found in Bouverie Street included Mr. Herbert Paul, to whom Cook's friends used humorously to refer as "the thorn in the flesh". Mr. Paul held views diametrically and violently opposed to Cook's on the main political issue of the day, that of Imperialism *versus* Little Englandism. Cook had many a little skirmish with his leader-writer, whom he held in



a firm but courteous control.<sup>1</sup> "Paul is to you", said Lord Rosebery, "what Harcourt is to me". "Why", Cook was asked, "do you go it so strong over this Dreyfus affair?" "Oh, it is useful to have something for Paul to use his teeth in". It should be noted, however, that friendly relations were never interrupted, and that Mr. Paul, when the final catastrophe occurred in Bouverie Street, paid the handsomest tributes to Cook's qualities as an editor.

Cook's editorial staff also contained another Paul, Alexander by name, an able writer and very loyal and pleasant colleague, who joined the small army of martyrs when the time of testifying came. The Parliamentary sketch was continued in the hands of Mr. (afterwards Sir) H. W. Lucy, and was illustrated for a time by Mr. Harry Furniss, whose pictures brought to the editor's table letters of warm admiration or equally warm antipathy, according to views and taste. Another distinguished contributor was Mr. Moy Thomas, the veteran dramatic critic.

It is needless to say that Cook was besieged with numerous applications for work, among which was one from a gentleman who drew attention to the leaders he had written for another paper and added: "I can write them to order, as an advocate, on any lines I am bidden follow". It is curious he should have imagined that the possession of so obliging a conscience would recommend him to, of all men in the world, Edward Cook.

The political weather in prospect when Cook embarked on the *Daily News* was not encouraging. The Liberal party, of which the *Daily News* was the leading organ, had suffered a defeat and a popular discredit

<sup>1</sup> It throws a strange light upon political differences in those days, and perhaps illustrates Cook's forbearance, that in 1899 Mr. Paul published an article in the *Contemporary Review* attacking (at one point almost by express inference) the policy of the paper on which he was engaged. This article was quoted approvingly by the *Daily Chronicle*.

which had broken its spirit and discipline. As Froude once very truly remarked, "no party can hold together unless encouraged by occasional victory". The fortunes of Liberalism were reflected in its *moral*. The party, as Sir William Harcourt expressed it, was "rent by sectional disputes and personal interests". Between the Earl of Rosebery, ex-Premier, who, though technically only leader in the House of Lords, was the titular leader of the party, and Sir William Harcourt, leader in the House of Commons, and between the sections who followed these leaders, there was open and bitter hostility. It would be a mistake to imagine that the quarrel was one merely of persons and personalities. It was based upon a radical divergence in political principle which had long been widening and was destined to become a great gulf when the testing issues of the South African War arose. To some observers the difference between Little Englanders and Imperialists, to use the common terms, seemed so fundamental as to justify a party rather than a merely sectional division.

As regards the particular personal dispute between Lord Rosebery and Sir William Harcourt, the evidence seems rather to justify the ex-Premier. Sir William's temper in the brightest of weather was never angelic: in darkness and defeat it was apt to be the reverse. He had great qualities, among which was a readiness to help people in tight corners, manifested, for example, in the case of Cecil Rhodes. But he was difficult to work with and his temper had not been improved by a series of disappointments. In 1882 he had aspired to the Speakership, in 1885 to the Lord Chancellorship, and his great ambition, as he himself admitted, had been to become Lord Chief Justice. Then in 1894 came the bitterest of all misfortunes, when his high claims and qualifications were passed over in favour of Lord Rose-

bery. He had some cause to rail at fortune, but this could not justify his persistent opposition to Lord Rosebery, who had not forced himself into the highest place but had been made Prime Minister by the almost unanimous call of the party leaders and the approving invitation of the Queen.

Lord Rosebery had a perfect right to the loyal support of the party. As those days recede into history he will be more and more recognized as the wisest and most statesmanlike counsellor the party then possessed. Already in his Eton days he had been sketched by his tutor as "a portentously wise youth, not, however, deficient in fun". But Mr. Cory rather ominously added, "Dalmeny desires the palm without the dust". At the date we have reached (1896) Lord Rosebery had done more than any other statesman to restore confidence at home and abroad in the Liberal Party in the domains of foreign and Imperial policy. With regard to Egypt, Uganda, Armenia, Japan and Ireland he had brought Liberal action within the bounds of common sense and a broad-minded patriotism. He had developed Liberal policy in accordance with the new conditions and ideas of the day. He had expounded with splendid eloquence and in a Liberal sense the new-born conception of a "larger patriotism" embracing the whole Empire. A nobleman is not necessarily a gentleman, because the lesser does not contain the greater. But Lord Rosebery's "gentilhood" was instinctive and unerring. It was said indeed by his critics that he was too thin-skinned: "a politician ought to have a hide and not a skin". But a thick skin often goes with a thick head, and not often with real literary and political genius. If the Liberal Party had retained and loyally supported Lord Rosebery its fortunes down to this day, when it is once more

riven into irreconcilable sections, might have been different.

At the beginning of 1896 Cook became by accident the intermediary between Mr. John Morley and Lord Rosebery. The latter had already sent an ultimatum, breaking off political relations with Sir William Harcourt. Mr. Morley begged Cook to use his influence with Rosebery and urge him to reconsider this step. Harcourt, it seems, was asking on what he was going to be "arraigned". One may remark that the offences in cases of this sort are just those which cannot be set down in a bill of indictment, and Sir William Harcourt knew this well enough. Mr. Morley represented to Cook, and through him to Lord Rosebery, that Harcourt could not conveniently be abolished. "There Harcourt is and there am I and we don't mean to be snuffed out. But if Rosebery resigns, that will break up the party too, for, though he has not acted very strongly in his position, still he has held it and there he is. To break up a party on personal views is a serious thing, and all because for a short time more Rosebery won't put up with the thorns. Harcourt is an old man, nearly seventy. Rosebery is under fifty, the future is all with him and he's as clever as clever can be. On policy there is nothing, I believe, irreconcilable between Rosebery and Harcourt. Between Rosebery and me I really believe there is." Mr Morley admitted the difficulty of living with Harcourt. "He's damnably overbearing, and he's gone about the lobbies damning the Government: but this includes himself. . . . On the other side there is this—he was badly disappointed and had an intolerable affront passed on him. Yet he led the House very well and passed a splendid Budget. Yet Rosebery says he must go. But Rosebery cannot carry the whole party with him". Harcourt, according to Morley, was now in

a "chastened mood", and there was no reason why the two men should not meet.

All which, at Morley's urgent request, Cook duly conveyed to Lord Rosebery at Mentmore, whither he repaired on Saturday, January 18, 1896. "Such a palace", Cook exclaims, "and, as Matthew Arnold says, 'the perfection of comfort'. We dined and talked and smoked afterwards. On Sunday Rosebery took me for a walk, to see Ladas at the stud farm. After lunch Waterfield (private secretary) and I went over the gardens. Rosebery joined us and we had some more private talk".

But Cook's efforts at mediation were unsuccessful. The offences had gone too far. "I repeated a good deal of J. M.'s to him, ingeminating peace; he retorting much of it to be *in re* Paul". All Cook's efforts were in vain. Perhaps he expected they would be. His own sympathies leaned heavily towards Rosebery. It is certain he had little liking, personal or political, for Sir William Harcourt, who, moreover, was rather fond of flouting a profession of whose prestige and dignity Cook was a jealous defender. Cook quickly found that the pin-pricks, in their accumulated effect, had at last proved too much for the thin skin. Rosebery had written on August 10 "cutting off Harcourt", and acquainting his colleagues that nothing in the world would ever induce him to unsay it.

By the assurance of a "chastened mood" Lord Rosebery was not impressed. It had perhaps been ascertained that the House of Commons was not particularly Harcourtian, and in any case "a man who takes the pledge for a week is not less but more violent when he breaks it". Formal pledges as to future support were useless. "No", concluded Lord Rosebery, "it is a fraud on the party, an organized hypocrisy, and I will have no more of it. Every man must be the judge

of his own honour". To Cook's inquiry, "What, then, is to be done?" Lord Rosebery replied:

"I have told my colleagues I am perfectly willing formally to retire. Shut up with four hundred Tories in the Lords, a Prime Minister deserves extra consideration, but never a colleague ever defended me, though one and all, except Harcourt, begged me to form a Government. I was sent for by the Queen and urged on by them, but never chosen by the party. If they like, therefore, I will clear out and let the party be united under Harcourt and Morley, with Dilke and Labby and Phil Stanhope, who are their only following".

In October the inevitable happened and Lord Rosebery finally retired from responsible leadership of the Liberal Party.<sup>1</sup> It is a curious and thought-compelling fact that less than five years afterwards Edward Cook, who in soundness of political intuition was perhaps Rosebery's equal, and who in co-operation with Rosebery in their respective spheres might have constituted "a perfect strength", was himself extruded finally from a responsible position in Liberal journalism. What Cook had to say about the resignation in the *Daily News* is well worth quoting, as it unquestionably corresponds with the real facts and justly interprets them:

Some, no doubt, will shrug their shoulders and say that a man who is not thick-skinned enough to hold his place, no matter

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<sup>1</sup> It was suggested at the time that Rosebery's real motive for resignation was the necessity in which he was placed of withstanding Mr. Gladstone face to face on the subject of Armenia. "He had too strong a regard", it was suggested, "for his old chief and too high a sense of what was due to the party and its leader to take this step whilst actually holding the post which he had inherited from Mr. Gladstone himself". There is no evidence, however, that any large section of the party or any leaders were prepared to go any further than Rosebery in single-handed action against Turkey. Lord Rosebery had protested in the previous March against Mr. Gladstone's policy "pressed on a reluctant Europe and an apathetic England". The motive in question can scarcely have operated.

what is said about him or done to him, had better be out of the way and make room for the less scrupulous build of political pachydermata. But others, however much they may deplore the particular move taken by Lord Rosebery, will feel no little sympathy for a man whose personal and honourable pride is superior to any pride of place, and who finds the position of leader without the entire loyalty of his followers one not easily to be borne (Leader, "D.N.", Oct. 8).

As for the personal questions which lie behind the political issue, all we need say at this moment is that when (if ever) the time comes for telling the inner history of the past two years, the public will assuredly recognize that Lord Rosebery's resignation was a perfectly defensible and honourable move on his part to end a situation in which no leader should be placed (Leader, Oct. 9, 1896).

Does the majority of the party desire to use up its public men in this way?—to turn and rend them so speedily?—and to give to political disloyalty and personal jealousies the encouragement of success? (Leader, Oct. 10).

In the first leading article quoted Cook expresses a hope that the letter of resignation would clear the air and Rosebery be re-elected—an aspiration not destined to be fulfilled.

Nevertheless Rosebery was to be a presence and a power in English politics for some years to come, and the close friendship between his lordship and Edward Cook subsisted through all changes.

The year 1897 saw Cook resisting one of those emotional currents which sometimes threaten to carry the English ship of state into shallow and perilous waters. Those who are most violent in promoting these crusades are not always prepared themselves to enlist in them. Thus in 1897 the English phil-Hellenes were wild for a war with Turkey, but wholly at the expense of the little kingdom of Greece. Many still remember the manifesto of the hundred Liberal stalwarts to the King of Greece, and the bands and banners of the Hyde Park demonstra-

tions of sympathy with Greece and with "the heroic struggle of the Cretans for their lives and liberties". Very few, if any, of these fanatics had any intention of endangering their own skins for Armenia or Greece or Crete,<sup>1</sup> but the noise they made was mistaken in Greece for the voice of the English people.

Cook, though full of sympathy with the oppressed nationalities of the Turkish Empire, fought for prudence and restraint in the national policy. If his advice had been followed Greece would have been saved from a war which almost brought her to destruction, and the essential objects of the friends of liberty everywhere could have been otherwise attained. Though not approving of all the actions of the "Concert of Europe", Cook saw the necessity of England playing a recognized instrument in the orchestra rather than raising that discordant and independent pibroch so much favoured by the wild pipers of the Liberal Party. Again and again he refers in the *Daily News* to the year 1885 when under Gladstone and Rosebery an ultimatum was presented to Greece, backed by the blockade of the allied fleets, calling on her to place her land and sea forces on a peace footing. Greece was thus saved from herself. "Eleven years later", writes Cook, "Greece was to commit the same mistake as that from which she was saved in 1886. Lord Salisbury lacked either the fortune or the resolution to repeat Lord Rosebery's success".<sup>2</sup>

Lord Salisbury, who sincerely desired to prevent the war, was in a difficult position. Probably any attempt to coerce Greece would have been resented in the existing state of opinion in England. "The weapon

<sup>1</sup> Sir Frank Lockwood, M.P., told his constituents that he would not sign the hundred Liberals' manifesto "unless he was prepared by physical exertion on his own part to act".

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of Lord Rosebery*. By E. T. Cook (1901), p. 11. In this little work Cook gave a most able and exhaustive exposition of our foreign affairs during the specified period.



we desired to use", he said after the short and disastrous struggle, "was not the sword so much as the strait-waistcoat". Neither weapon was effectively applied, and the war began on April 19. A few quotations from Cook's leading articles will show how at this time he "tempered emotion with statesmanship":

*April 3.*—As for the suggestion of leaving the Concert and embarking on a policy of adventure on our own account, we trust that Sir W. Harcourt will not allow himself to be carried into any action which, explicitly or by implication, would countenance such an alternative.

*April 5.*—To make war in Europe in order to obtain compensation for the substitution of autonomy for annexation in Crete would be utterly inexcusable.

*April 13.*—In the long run the sober sense of the Liberal Party will remain faithful, we are convinced, to the principle formulated by the greatest of modern leaders in the greatest of his speeches—the principle of combining the pursuit of freedom with the maintenance of European peace and with loyalty to the European Concert.

*April 16.*—The right which some of our latter-day friends of peace hold most sacred is the right of war, both civil and international. We are not for Peace-at-any-price, nor are we prepared to join the War-at-any-price party, least of all since it is in reality a War-for-others-at-any-price party.

After the outbreak of war Cook does not fail to point out that Greece in the circumstances was the aggressor. He predicts the inevitable issue of the struggle. "The odds against Greece are so great that only a political gambler could feel justified, it seems to us, in urging Greece on to the encounter". On April 29 he writes:

It seems to us that any one in Athens or elsewhere who should egg the Greeks on to further resistance would incur a responsibility only less serious than that of those who helped to plunge her into the initial blunder.

On May 7 Cook points out that after all Greece owes to the

Concert: (1) that Crete by being neutralized during the war (against which the English crusaders had protested) was saved from Turkey; (2) her own salvation. The contemporary phil-Hellenes, having denounced the Concert, now call upon its good offices. "The simple fact is that the Concert is now the only thing that stands between Greece and destruction".

With regard to this incident every one to-day will admit the accuracy of Cook's previsions and the soundness of the policy he commended to his fellow-countrymen.

During 1898 Cook rendered two important public services which lay outside his strictly journalistic work. He settled two rather stubborn industrial disputes, in the engineering and the building trades. The men's demand in the former was for a forty-eight hours' week and for some right of interference in business management. The employers were credited with a desire to smash the Unions. As the Government had decided not to intervene and the employers had declined formal arbitration, things had reached an *impasse* when Cook came forward and offered himself as informal mediator. "The Editor of the *Daily News*", wrote a provincial paper, "was the one man in the country to perceive the psychological moment for intervening in the engineering dispute, and the only possessor of sufficient tact to bring the contending parties together at the right instant". Cook submitted to each side a proposed basis of settlement and brought the two parties into conference. The result was a satisfactory settlement, for which Cook received many congratulations. The *Daily Chronicle* of those days which had greatly emotionalized over the strike was a little disgruntled that the laurel should thus have been won by "a journal which had shown no particular sympathy with" the engineers. That may have been annoying, but it was characteristic of Cook thus to wait

without any striving or crying until the time for action came, and then to act unemotionally but with practical decision and unerring judgment. The result was summed up in the *Daily News* in a passage which contains some economic teaching about the relation between wages and production which seems to be as needful to-day as then. If the employers were out to smash the Unions, writes the *Daily News*, they have failed.

But in the object of securing "freedom of management" as defined by the employers they have undoubtedly succeeded, and we do not see why anybody—no matter how strong his sympathies with labour may be—should grudge them that success. It is no longer necessary to discuss how far the fears and complaints of the employers with regard to the restrictive action of the Unions were well founded. The fact remains that the employers believed the efficiency of their workshops to be at stake, and that they have secured the adoption of the rules which they deem necessary for the successful conduct of their business. We may all hope that the employers will in this matter turn out to be correct, and it will be distinctly to the interest of the men to co-operate heartily to that end. The way to shorter hours (or higher wages) lies, as we have so often said, through increased efficiency in production. If this is now obtained, the time need not be far distant when the men will be in a position to claim out of the mouths, as it were, of the employers themselves a share in the economic advantage of the settlement to which they are now asked to subscribe. In this sense the "victory" of the employers may in the long run be to the advantage of the men.

In the summer the second triumph was won in the settlement of a similarly intractable dispute in the building trade. In February some of the London members of the National Association of Operative Plasterers had struck against the employment of certain non-Unionist foremen. Soon afterwards a vote of the Association in London condemned this action. In the meantime, however, the National Association of Master Builders

had issued a list of grievances and declared a lock-out against the plasterers. This lock-out was enforced, and plasterers were discharged throughout the country. The dispute had begun to assume a more dangerous aspect by its threatened extension to the whole building trade, when Cook, with Mr. Clement Edwards of the *Daily News* as his assistant, came forward once more with a proposal for a conference and a suggested basis of agreement. This latter was accepted by both sides as a preliminary, and the conference met. It had been intended that Cook should simply open the palaver with a statement of the events which had led up to it, and then leave the delegates to thrash the subject out. But by a unanimous vote he was requested himself to take the chair. Thanks largely again to Cook's tact and wisdom the result was completely satisfactory. It can well be understood how Cook won the confidence of these disputants by the assurance he gave through his very character and presence that he would act with absolute justice and with a perfect freedom from all passion and prejudice.

Among the tributes he received for these repeated services came one from that great-hearted and liberal-minded Nonconformist divine, Dr. Guinness Rogers, who wrote :

109 CLAPHAM COMMON,  
June 2, 1898.

I cannot repress the impulse which leads me to congratulate you very heartily on the remarkable success which has attended your noble effort to settle the dispute in the plasterers' trade. It is an act of which any one may reasonably be proud. I am very thankful that it has been done by the Editor of our great Liberal paper.

This letter suggests some reference to the position of the *Daily News* as an organ of political nonconformity, a question which arose this year between Cook and his

directors. Cook was not himself a Nonconformist, but a Liberal churchman, and on his appointment some anxiety had been expressed by militant Dissenters lest the paper should lose its traditional character in this respect. On the other hand, Liberal churchmen had expressed their pleasure on finding that the paper was less narrowly sectarian than it had been under Mr. Clayden, who had himself been a Nonconformist minister, and other previous editors. The Nonconformists had no real ground for alarm. Cook's conduct of the *Westminster Gazette* was an assurance in itself that he would give them all legitimate support. There could be no doubt about his opinion on Church politics and Dis-establishment.

But the more extreme Denominationalists among *Daily News* readers were not all satisfied with this moderate and tolerant spirit of the paper and desired a little more "hot gospelling" from the direction. Towards the close of 1898 Mr. Arnold Morley, who held the largest share in the proprietorship, voiced this feeling in the following passages of a letter :

Since we met here two or three weeks ago I have been thinking over a subject which we then only lightly touched upon—the possibility of strengthening our positions with the great body of political Nonconformists in the country. I fear of late years the *Daily News* has lost ground in this direction, and it is certainly worth trying to regain it, especially if it can be done without sacrificing or endangering other interests. If it is possible, an essential condition must be made that upon all the main questions which strongly interest Nonconformists, the *Daily News* should speak out clearly and definitely on Nonconformist lines.

My object in writing to you now is to make a practical suggestion which, if you approve of it, I hope you will discuss with Robinson and Edwards, so that when we meet either here or at the office we may come to some decision. It is that once or twice a week and as much as possible on fixed days, of which

Saturday would probably be one, there should be a signed article written by some well-known Nonconformist on some special subject of immediate and paramount interest to the class whom I have mentioned. A few of the names which occur to me, and who would attract the kind of attention we want, are Dr. Clifford, Hugh Price Hughes, R. F. Horton, J. G. Greenhough of Leicester, Dr. Fairbairn, Dr. Berry. . . .

What we want is, so far as Nonconformists are concerned, to make them feel that the *Daily News* is still strong on the old lines which it occupied twenty or thirty years ago. I should not be surprised if we are entering on a period when ecclesiastical and educational questions will occupy a prominent position, and if this is so it is well that we should be prepared. Please consider this suggestion.

It would perhaps not be difficult for those who have followed Cook's record so far to forecast on general lines what would be his answer to these requests for more sectarian "ginger". Cook's reply is well worth giving in full, as in its combined fairness and firmness it is so characteristic of the man :

November 27, 1898.

I have given careful consideration to your letter of November 21, and shall do my best to carry out your idea about signed articles—which I think is well worth trying.

Hitherto I have relied rather on interviews—and during the last few weeks the *Daily News* has published interviews with Dr. Clifford, Hugh Price Hughes, Dr. Horton, Guinness Rogers ; also with Mr. Perks, M.P. Dr. Fairbairn is in India, and Dr. Berry is ill and unlikely, I am told, to resume his public duties. So you will see that during the last few weeks I have obtained the views of all the men you mention (as far as practicable) except Greenhough of Leicester, but I think it is only lately that he has come to the front. It is true that in one series of interviews I included also the Bishop of London, but I cannot think that this made the series less interesting.

I just mention these facts to remind you that I am fully alive to the desirability of meeting the interests of our Nonconformist readers.

I do not think I have been entirely unsuccessful. Please read and return enclosed letter from Rev. W. H. Harwood.<sup>1</sup> He is unknown to me personally, but I am told he is one of the most influential Nonconformist ministers in North London. His letter does not stand alone.

You refer also in your letter to Mr. Edwards's remarks at Stratton Street on October 23. To this matter also I have given my best consideration. As I understand him, his views are (1) that the *Daily News* should be very strongly sectarian in general policy, and (2) truculent in tone. I am afraid I should find it difficult to come up to his requirements on certain of these heads. I could not do it if I would; and I would not if I could, for I believe that it would be very bad policy for the paper.

(1) I doubt if you quite realize the lengths to which one would have to go to satisfy the extreme sectarians. Take Horton, for instance. I was with him at Oxford and he is an entirely sincere man; but his judgment is warped on certain questions. Consider the monstrous charges he has been scattering broadcast about the secret Romanism of the daily press (the *Daily News* not excluded). When challenged for his evidence he adduces the fact that in December 1895 (that was *ante me*) the *Daily News* did not insert a letter from a lady of his congregation, the purport of which was that all Roman Catholics were, as such, defenders of falsehood and guilty of other immoral beliefs! And now he and others are patronizing an association called the Protestant Truth Alliance, which publishes black lists of all London papers which have any Catholics among their writers, and argues by implication in favour of a journalistic Catholic Disabilities Act. Pretty doctrines for professed Liberals to preach! This is a sample of the sectarian extremists, for whom I am asked to cater. I do not believe you would wish me to do so, even if it did succeed in selling more copies of the paper.

But I do not for a moment believe that it would so succeed. Mr. Edwards, in his remarks on October 23, made a great point of a certain correspondence which he started in the paper. After some time, I understand that Sir John Robinson gave instruc-

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<sup>1</sup> He wrote: "I should like to thank you for the increased interest with which I now read the *Daily News*. I have been faithful to it for twenty years—ever since I took a London daily at all—and have never enjoyed it so much as now. I don't always agree with it, but that may not be the paper's fault".

tions for the correspondence to cease. Why? Because he concluded from letters which came and from conversations that the correspondence was doing no good either to the paper or to the Liberal Party. I expect he was right.

I do not believe there is any instance of a general newspaper succeeding by sectarianism. The papers with the large circulation are those which appeal most successfully to many different interests or to interests common to everybody.

The *Daily News* has lost many readers to the *Chronicle*. But why? Certainly not because the *Chronicle* is sectarian. In my opinion, because the *Chronicle* got the start of the *Daily News* by some years in enlarging its size and scope—and also no doubt in spending large sums of money on its development generally. So with the *Telegraph* and the *Mail*. Their secret is their width, not their narrowness of range. I do not believe a single good instance could be adduced to the contrary. The great prosperity of the *Daily News* was due to many causes in former times.

Each sect has for its sectarian interests a weekly paper of its own, none of them very prosperous, I believe. Probably the most prosperous is the *British Weekly*, the distinguishing characteristic of which is the large amount of space it gives to literary and personal gossip.

From a business point of view, what I am urging is, I believe, equally the case. A valuable advertising connection has never been built up on a sectarian basis.

(2) I now come to Mr. Edwards's second point, which referred to the style of writing. The *Daily News*, he said at Stratton Street, would increase its circulation by "giving ginger" to all non-Nonconformists. By this I suppose he meant to inculcate greater truculence of tone. Here again my views are diametrically opposite. I believe nothing damages a paper more than truculence. I fancy the *Daily News* has not done itself any good by political truculence even. Since I have been there, I have tried to moderate it. Such writing amuses the extremists, but makes the judicious, even on one's own side, grieve, because they know that it does no good in conciliating waverers. To apply such truculence to politico-religious questions, as Mr. Edwards advocated at Stratton Street, would in my opinion be very bad policy. The Liberal Party is a composite party, largely Non-



conformist, of course, but certainly not exclusively so. To set to work with the deliberate purpose of "giving ginger" to all contingents in the party except one, seems to me the very worst policy.

I think the foregoing summarizes my views on the second matter to which you have called my consideration. But please do not think that I am not alive to the importance in questions of practical politics of taking what one may roughly call the Liberal-Nonconformist line.

As you say, educational and ecclesiastical questions are very important just now. I maintain that the *Daily News* has taken a strong line, and has devoted great space to both. We had endless articles attacking the Education Bills. On the ritualist controversy we published far more news than any other paper, and in article after article argued (1) that the only real solution was Disestablishment, but that (2) so long as the Establishment remained, its Protestant basis must not be undermined.

The Irish University Question is another matter, and a very difficult one. In 1893 the Liberal Party unanimously favoured a Bill which would have established such a University by the Irish Parliament. Many leading Liberals favour a University even now. In a very moderate way, the *Daily News* inclined to John Morley's view. I cannot think that at the time such a line was indefensible.

The larger question of Home Rule remains behind. A few years ago the Liberal Nonconformists were anxious to concede Home Rule as a matter of "righteousness". Now, it seems, a good many of them want to refuse it on the log-rolling principle. The Irish Catholics would not help us to defeat an education bill; therefore we will not help them to Home Rule. I do not think that this is a view which the Liberal Party can honestly or wisely take. To start an anti-Irish crusade before the elections seems to me absurdly bad tactics. My view is rather with Sir Henry Fowler, though I thought he put the case rather injudiciously in some ways. I have mentioned this matter now because it is one on which I could not undertake to follow blindly every passing gust of Nonconformist opinion.

Similarly in the case of the Cretan question I could not have taken what was the popular Nonconformist line at the time and

encouraged Greece to go to the war. I think time has proved that the *Daily News* line was right. So I believe it will be with Home Rule, which sooner or later the Liberal Party will infallibly have to take up again, unless the Tories settle it first.

I am very sorry to have inflicted so long a letter upon you. But I have given the matter much consideration, and thought it was only right to let you have my views fully and frankly.

Another cataclysm occurred in the Liberal camp in December of this year. Sir William Harcourt resigned his leadership, the reasons being set forth in letters exchanged between himself and Mr. John Morley. It was humorously reported at the time that Morley had written Harcourt's and Harcourt Morley's. Both writers dwell on the chaotic conditions prevailing in the party. Mr. Morley's statement that Sir William had "laboured to promote unity of action" is not quite acceptable. Harcourt had no such grounds of just complaint as had forced Lord Rosebery to resign. Though he had accepted Rosebery's leadership, he had done everything in his power to thwart and oppose him. Harcourt at least received the loyal support of those who were not among his political friends. Some idea of Sir William's spirit and language may be derived from a story told in Cook's Diary. Sir Robert Reid had dined one evening with Lord Rosebery in an ordinary way of friendship. On returning to the House of Commons Harcourt asked him where he had been. Reid told him. "Oh", said Harcourt, "so you've joined that dirty intrigue, have you?" To represent Sir William Harcourt, who had unquestionably other great qualities, as a seeker and pursuer of peace and as a martyr to "the sectional disputes and personal interests" in the party will really not do.

It may be remembered that Harcourt's letter was thrown into a curiously conditional form, and Cook,

once asked for his interpretation of the letter, described it "as a feeler, to get a vote of confidence". Failing Rosebery, Cook now favoured the appointment of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—a genial statesman with whom he was personally acquainted. Cook records how at an unreported meeting at the Reform Club in February 1899 "C.-B." pitched into Harcourt and Morley roundly. "He saw no reason why an old gentleman shouldn't retire because his son, on whom he leaned, married. But why those two gentlemen should retire making insinuations against those they left behind, he couldn't imagine". Cook could not foresee that a controversy was even then raising its head which would divide the Liberal party once more into rival tabernacles and that he would have to fight "C.-B." and his friends through years of storm and stress.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENE

Much of the work of the journalist is humble and insignificant. He has, it is true, his golden opportunities sometimes, which make up for the more numerous hours of obscure drudgery—opportunities to strike some blow for a cause in which he believes, to help in righting a wrong, to form and not merely to follow public opinion, to nerve, it may even be, a nation's purpose.—SIR EDWARD COOK, *Literary Recreations*, p. 140.

THE negotiations with the Transvaal which preceded the Boer War and the war itself furnished Cook with one of these "golden opportunities". His most distinctive gift was one of exposition, of arranging and interpreting facts and presenting an issue to his readers clearly detached from the jungle of minor and confusing circumstance. "Prudens quaestio", said Bacon, "dimidium responsionis". When you have once clearly stated to yourself a question or problem you are halfway towards the answer, and this is what Cook continually enabled his readers to do. The opportunity afforded by the Boer War was in every way congenial to him. He was in politics a Liberal Imperialist, and the British case in South Africa was Liberal in its claim of constitutional rights for a community unjustly deprived of them; and it was Imperial because it involved the defence of our position in South Africa and of the whole Empire against an insidious but deadly menace. Cook was at this time in the heyday of his mental and physical powers.

He had attained a high influence and reputation, personal and political, and he devoted himself with a perfect concentration upon the statement and defence of the British cause in South Africa.

There were other reasons why Cook seemed to be providentially designed for this task. He had closely followed South African politics at a time when few Englishmen had the slightest acquaintance with them. His two greatest friends, Alfred Milner and Edmund Garrett, were themselves in South Africa maintaining British interests in their respective spheres, and through them Cook acquired a more vivid and personal knowledge of South African conditions. The tremendous controversy began to stir about the beginning of 1899, some three years after the Raid had temporarily estopped the British efforts for redress in the Transvaal. The task was set, and, as so often in our British annals, the man was provided who should accomplish it.

The whole record of British journalism has not produced a series of consecutive articles more sustained in wisdom and ability than those which Cook published in the *Daily News* during the years 1900 and 1901. Never has such a steady and prolonged illumination of sense and reason been poured upon any political crisis as radiated from Bouverie Street in those days of diplomatic and military conflict with the South African Republics. I was myself appointed as a leader-writer on the *Daily News* in 1899. I was housed in a room leading from Cook's editorial sanctum and was thus in the closest contact with the editor during every evening's work. Thus one became familiar with Cook's method of work, and the impression of the ease and power and imperturbable calm with which he expounded and often directed the policy of the country in those stormy days is still as vivid as ever. I say "directed", for it is no secret that

Cook's articles were a constant source of counsel and suggestion to the Government, which indeed at one critical moment almost bodily adopted a dispatch to Mr. Kruger which Cook had himself drafted and which he suggested in the columns of his paper.

It is not necessary to rehearse the stages of the long diplomatic struggle which culminated in war on October 9, 1899. And happily Cook's biographer is saved the labour of exploring the immense volumes of the *Daily News* which cover this period. Cook has himself written the history of those years, incidentally reproducing much of what he wrote in his paper. *The Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War*, published in 1901 after Cook had "suffered" again for conscience' sake, is the classic and standard *apologia* for British policy in South Africa during these years. I find in a fly-leaf of the copy which Cook sent to me a sentence in which I tried to express the real "secret" of this enduring monument. It is the offspring, I wrote, of "the spirit which insists not that the facts shall square with a preconceived judgment, but that the judgment shall emerge from the facts honestly sought and faithfully reproduced". The appeal of Cook's leading articles on the South African question was never to passion or prejudice but always to reason and logic based upon ascertained truth.

Facts were indeed our raw material in the Bouverie Street factory under Cook's direction. He had a marvellous flair for the discovery of vital and relevant material. One example may be mentioned. It was he who unearthed and published that famous passage in the conversations between Sir Hercules Robinson (President of the Commission) and Mr. Kruger at an official conference in 1881 at the time when Kruger was securing the retrocession of the Transvaal. The decisive little dia-

logue which Cook had first quoted as early as May 2, 1896, in the *Daily News* ran thus :

*President.* Before annexation, had British subjects complete freedom of trade throughout the Transvaal ? Were they on the same footing as citizens of the Transvaal ?

*Mr. Kruger.* They were on the same footing as the burghers ; there was not the slightest difference, in accordance with the Sand River Convention.

*President.* I presume you will not object to that continuing ?

*Mr. Kruger.* No. There will be equal protection for everybody.

*Sir E. Wood.* And equal privileges ?

*Mr. Kruger.* We make no difference so far as burgher rights are concerned. There may perhaps be some slight difference in the case of a young person who has just come into the country.

The publication of these words was something more than a mere journalistic " coup ". It was rightly and generously described by Mr. Buckle, the editor of *The Times*, as " a public service ".

It will be noticed that Cook began to place his finger on the ailing-spot in South African politics and to expound the fundamentals of British interests in that region several years before the final controversy arose. In the first article he published as editor of the *Daily News* we find a passage which shows much foresight and is surely Liberal as well as Imperialist in spirit :

The key to the situation in South Africa is the redress of the grievances of the Uitlanders in the Transvaal. " Force is no remedy ". The force which Dr. Jameson so unhappily thought to apply cured nothing. And neither will the disarmament, which the Boers and the British High Commissioner effected, cure anything. So long as the root of the evil is untouched, symptoms of disturbance will inevitably recur, and sooner or later it is tolerably certain that the Uitlanders must succeed. It is idle to suppose that a large and growing community of English-speaking men, accustomed to free institutions, can for ever be

kept under the heel of an oligarchy. Sooner or later, then, their deliverance must come. But it may make just all the difference to the future of South Africa how it comes. We want it to come not after another race war, and not so as to result in the creation of a Republic, speaking the English tongue, but hostile to England in sentiment. . . . A Boer Republic with its internal independence secured, a Rand with its local liberties secure: on such terms only can the peaceful development of South Africa, under the protection of this country as the paramount Power, be secured (February 10, 1896).

Cook's main task was not to talk to the converted in the Unionist camp but to impress the Liberal Party with the justice of the British case. There were a large number in that party whose panoply of prejudice against the Empire and all its concerns was quite impenetrable, though it would be a mistake to identify "pro-Boerism" entirely with "Little Englandism". But Cook's daily appeal to reason and fact and Liberal principle had no doubt a decisive influence. As a well-known Liberal worker expressed it, the *Daily News* kept the party from becoming a "Kruger clique".

Incidentally I may add that this was the prime object with which the Imperial Liberal Council was formed in 1900. It arose originally from a comparison of notes between one or two of us younger Liberals after a meeting of the Eighty Club which Lord Coleridge had addressed apparently on the assumption that all Liberals were anti-British during the Boer War. We had concluded independently that this could no longer continue and that it was necessary to organize and vocalize the large body of pro-British feeling within the Liberal camp. We quickly got together a large membership of young and energetic Liberals of Independent sympathies<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The list of our first officials was: President, Lord Brassey, K.C.B.; Vice-President, R. W. Perks, M.P.; Committee—Chairman, Heber Hart, LL.D.; Vice-Chairman, J. W. Greig; A. C. Forster Boulton, Hon. T. A. Brassey, J. R.



and began without delay the work of propaganda within the party. We received greetings from afar from Lord Rosebery who severely criticised our rather flamboyant title. Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Fowler and other Liberal leaders, who of course had party obligations, were slow to acknowledge us, but we gradually received their countenance and at last their effectual help.

It was naturally of much importance that the *Daily News* should declare in our favour. But Cook, still anxious to preserve at least an outward Liberal unity, interposed a firm but courteous negative. The *mot d'ordre* was that blessed word "permeation". We were to propagate to our hearts' content but formal schism was to be avoided. Well I remember the evening on which Cook raised the embargo and told me to "fire away" about the doings and dinings of the Liberal Imperial Council. That body was merged afterwards in the Liberal League, but on arriving in South Africa early in 1901 and plunging into politics there I felt the advantage of being able to point to the Liberal Imperial Council as an evidence that the whole Liberal Party was not against the war and the Government.

Yet it remains true that the greatest and oldest Liberal organ, the *Daily News*, was through all this crisis in conflict with a majority, though perhaps not a large majority, of the party. Cook never became flurried or irritated by opposition, though it was often expressed in violent terms. I am not sure that his unruffled calm and the clearness and simplicity with which he presented his case to Liberal readers did not act as a provocation.

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Brough, John Bruce, W. B. Duffield, John Fuller, M.P., Cecil B. Harmsworth, Hudson E. Kearley, M.P., J. Saxon Mills, H. H. Raphael, A. G. Rickards, Q.C., Robert Steven, E. P. Tennant, James Todd; Hon. Treasurer, Sir Martin Conway; Secretary, E. T. Slater. Some of these gentlemen have gone far in more than one sense since then.

Take, for example, such a passage as follows from the *Daily News*' leading articles in July 1899 :

What Mr. Gladstone intended in 1881 was to confer upon the inhabitants of the Transvaal internal independence and the rights of self-government. But what is the actual use to which the boon has been put ? It is the instalment of a minority in the exclusive possession of political rights. The majority, the Uitlanders, pay in taxation £25 a head ; the minority, the Boers, pay less than £4 a head. But the minority alone have political power. The majority have no votes, may carry no arms and have no means of constitutional redress. Great Britain claims to be, and is, in a position of " suzerainty ", or whatever it should be called, towards the Transvaal. Yet in that state settlers of British origin, so far from being in a position of equality with the Dutch settlers, are stamped with political inferiority. And this treatment they receive from a President who, when he was seeking the concession of Home Rule, pledged his word that " no difference was made so far as burgher rights were concerned ". How Liberals can with any self-respect tolerate this gross perversion of the wise policy intended by their great leader, Mr. Gladstone, passes our comprehension.

It is not surprising that Liberals, thus smitten with weapons from their own armoury, should have been extremely annoyed with the *Daily News* and its editor. It was easier to insinuate and abuse than to answer Cook's argument. Suggestions of undue influence and even veiled charges of corruption were brought against him. A certain member of Parliament, having rather more than hinted this sort of thing in a speech reported in the *Daily News*, wrote sheltering himself behind an alleged inaccuracy in the report. Cook replied with a coolness almost of indifference :

June 22, 1899.

You say that our report was inaccurate ; but you do not specify the inaccuracies. Our reporter understood you to refer to the *Daily News* as now " the paper of Rhodes & Co." I

accept your explanation that this meant nothing except that the views expressed by the *Daily News* on the Transvaal crisis happen to agree with those which Mr. Rhodes is understood to hold.

You must permit me to express my regret that you did not put your meaning less ambiguously. If I said that some paper was the paper of "Kruger & Co.", I should certainly expect to be taken as meaning something more than that the paper in question happened to express views on public and independent grounds which were in general agreement with the views of Mr. Kruger.

There, as may be imagined, the correspondence ceased.

Another gentleman had gone as near as he dared to a charge of actual bribery. "There is reason to believe," he said, "that some of the newspapers have had it made financially worth their while to support the war. I trust this does not apply to the *Daily News*". "I have known", he also added, "some lamentable instances of editors feeling bound under stress of the instructions of their proprietary to follow a popular line". To this wary slanderer Cook wrote :

There is not an atom or iota of truth in any of the insinuations which you thus make ; and I submit to you, as a man of honour, that it is extremely discreditable to harbour and circulate base suspicions against those who differ from you on a political question. You are prudent enough to make your suggestions very vague ; but conduct such as this is not less reprehensible morally because it is safe legally.

It is not suggested that all Cook's critics indulged in these dark insinuations. Many of his friends and admirers differed sincerely from his views and expressed their disagreement in moderate and courteous language. But neither on this nor on any other occasion was Cook to be diverted by friend or foe from the policy which he considered to be that of justice and truth. He went on industriously with his task of "permeation" and public

instruction. We may take once more at random a passage which shows how clearly and patiently he reasoned with all objectors. It occurs in a leading article of September 20 :

One of Mr. Kruger's defenders in this country wants to know, with regard to the proposed use of English in the Volksraad, how we should like "a variegated debate in the House of Commons in which naturalized Dutchmen and Germans added a new terror to Parliamentary oratory by introducing the twangs and gutturals of their own tongues". We are not aware that a majority of the taxpayers in this country are Dutchmen and Germans, or that there is any demand for the admission of such "twang and guttural" Uitlanders to Parliamentary representation. But there are within the British Empire two cases which are really to the point. One is the Cape, with its mixed English-speaking and Dutch-speaking population. The other is Canada, with its mixed English-speaking and French-speaking population. In both cases there is equality between the two languages in the legislature. Mr. Reitz, in the Boer reply, speaks of Dutch as "the language of the country". It is the official language, we all know. But "the language of the country", in the sense of the language most widely used in commercial, and probably even in domestic life, is English. The vigour with which Mr. Reitz denounces the idea of English being allowed side by side with Dutch in the Volksraad throws some light on the "goodwill" of the Transvaal Government in the whole matter of the franchise. To admit the Uitlanders, but to forbid them to speak except in Dutch, would be to give them a vote, but not a voice.

It was just at this time that Cook by his statesman-like wisdom helped the Government out of a pressing difficulty. President Kruger had rejected the very moderate and conciliatory proposals, based on the five years' franchise, contained in the British despatch of September 8. This produced an *impasse* from which the only outlet seemed to be a declaration of war. It was highly important, however, that a still further chance should be allowed to the Transvaal Government of

adopting wiser counsels. If the British Government had proceeded at once, as they reserved themselves the right to do in the despatch of September 8, "to reconsider the situation *de novo* and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement", that would have amounted to an ultimatum and war would have been inevitable. On September 19 Cook suggested in his leading article that, with the view of gaining time and leaving the door still open for the Boers, an *interim* despatch should be sent. While announcing that the Government would now proceed to consider the situation *de novo*, further assurances and explanations might be given on such questions as that of "suzerainty" on which the Boers laid the greatest stress. Cook amplified and urged still more strongly his proposal in a further article on September 21. By giving the Transvaal Government such a further opportunity the British Government, said Cook, "would set itself right with important sections of opinion in this country and, in the event of the failure of a sincere effort for peace on these lines, might hope to find behind it the support of a united nation". On September 22 he drafted in the *Daily News* the sort of despatch which he thought would serve as the "golden bridge". It postponed, as will be seen, the formulation of new proposals for a later period and so gave the South African Republic a chance, if it so desired, of anticipating any such proposals by remedying its old offers.

Her Majesty's Government have received with regret the note of the South African Republic of September 16, in which their proposal of September 5 is rejected.

Their regret is increased by the fact that their proposal was based on the offers made by the Government of the South African Republic itself in its note of August 19.

With regard to the "conditions" attached to that note, it is quite true that Her Majesty's Government were unable to accept

them in the form in which they were presented. But Her Majesty's Government may point out that (1) they have expressed their readiness, in the event of their other proposals being accepted, to proceed at once to a conference to settle all the details of the proposed Tribunal of Arbitration; and (2) that their object in proposing a scheme of franchise reform is to enable the Uitlanders to redress their own grievances, and thereby to render unnecessary any further intervention on the part of Her Majesty's Government in relation to such grievances. (3) Her Majesty's Government may point out, further, that while they are compelled to repudiate absolutely the claim of the South African Republic to the status of a Sovereign International State, they have no intention to assert on behalf of Her Majesty any right of interference in the internal affairs of the Republic other than that which belongs to every Government for the protection of its subjects wherever they may reside, or than that which is contained in the Articles of the Convention of 1884.

In view of the rejection by the Transvaal Government of the proposal contained in the note of September 8, Her Majesty's Government, in the exercise of the right reserved in that note, are now formulating their own proposals for a final settlement, which will be submitted forthwith to the Government of the South African Republic.

For the effect of these suggestions in high quarters we may turn to Cook's brief account in his Diary. For September 21 he writes :

Went to see Selborne after Cabinet meeting to ask what had been done. " Mr. Chamberlain ", he said, " told me to give you a hint that your despatch had been adopted. I drafted one and you drafted one, and in some respects the Cabinet preferred yours. This is probably the only occasion on which an editor of the *Daily News* has drafted a despatch for a Conservative Government ".

In the afternoon Harmsworth rang me up on the telephone to say he had heard from two Cabinet Ministers that Mr. Chamberlain had brought in *Daily News'* article to the Cabinet and said he proposed to send a despatch on those lines. Oppenheim also told me from Lord Rothschild the same.

It would have been well if the Government had paid Cook the compliment of a quite literal adoption of his drafted despatch. The alterations were not all improvements. For example, Cook had based the rights of British interference in the internal affairs of the Transvaal on the Convention of 1884. The Government altered the singular to the plural, "Conventions", and thus needlessly suggested to the Boer once more that the British Government under the preamble of the 1881 Convention threatened the existing liberties of the Republic. It enabled the over-subtle opponents of the Government to repeat that it was "going to war for a consonant".

It is clear that Cook's counsel through all these negotiations and afterwards during the war was highly estimated in Government circles. Mr. McDonnell, Lord Salisbury's private secretary, said to Cook in the "Foreign Office" a week after the "*interim* despatch" incident, "It is not merely my opinion but that of much more important people that the *Daily News* articles are the most brilliant things that have appeared in journalism for many years". And this high opinion was expressed by so many who wrote to Cook on the subject that it is difficult to make a choice among such tributes. I doubt whether any penny newspaper ever had so great an intrinsic value and was so carefully read and filed and dissected into "cuttings" as the *Daily News* under Edward Cook. For example, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Henry Norman wrote in March 1900 :

The fight you are making for patriotism and common sense in the *Daily News* is beyond praise. I have never seen so first-rate a prolonged series of leaders in my life. A very prominent Liberal the other day said to me, talking of this subject : "I cut out a leader in the *Daily News* which I think is the best I ever saw in my life". He took out his pocket-book and showed it to me—

the one about those asses and the "Gladstone League". I took out *my* pocket-book and showed him the same thing.

A similar tribute comes from a gentleman, Mr. Charles Phillips, in Lancashire, dated September 1900 :

The *Daily News* is indispensable to me, and when I can't get it on account of absence for several days, I am compelled to get the back numbers. A number of gentlemen were together recently in a Manchester *café* when three confessed that their objection to the *Daily News* was that it was "too good"—they had to be continually cutting out extracts, and they had now such a pile that they had become unwieldy.

From political leaders and members of Parliament such acknowledgments are numerous. Even fellow-craftsmen in the Conservative Party sent their congratulations. Mr. E. B. Iwan-Müller, one of the most brilliant of British journalists, who had helped Mr. Cust to edit the *Pall Mall Gazette* and was long on the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, wrote (Oct. 12, 1899) :

I hope you won't think me impertinent in tendering you—if only for the sake of our common friend, Alfred Milner—my insignificant tribute of admiration and respect for the splendid patriotism and rare judgment you have displayed in a position more difficult and delicate, I should imagine, than any journalist of modern times has had to tackle. I honestly believe that, but for the *Daily News*, we should find ourselves divided into two hostile camps at a time more critical than the outside world wot of. I can only hope that your action has contributed as much to the prosperity of the paper as it undoubtedly has, in the estimation of everybody I meet, to your own personal reputation. New College<sup>1</sup> in the matter has been all on the same side, and that, I am absolutely convinced, the right side. I had to liberate my soul, and I've done it.

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<sup>1</sup> From New College, indeed, came more than one tribute. Mr. P. E. Matheson, Fellow and Dean of the College, writes: "I have enjoyed reading the *Daily News*' articles on the Transvaal business, which have done more than anything else I have seen to keep the main issue without prejudice or passion before the public"—a very accurate characterization of Cook's work.



*A propos* of Mr. Iwan-Müller's reference to the prosperity of the *Daily News*, it is worth noticing that for the year 1900 the paper's circulation shows a rise instead of a fall for the first time since 1890. The advent of the halfpenny paper had rather severely hit the *Daily News* during the first few years of Cook's editorship. It may be interesting to give the figures of average circulation for ten years. Cook's editorship began with the year 1896.

1890	.	.	.	93,203
1891	.	.	.	89,133
1892	.	.	.	87,917
1893	.	.	.	82,012
1894	.	.	.	72,415
1895	.	.	.	66,341
1896	.	.	.	61,584 -
1897	.	.	.	57,404
1898	.	.	.	56,073
1899	.	.	.	55,969
1900	.	.	.	61,000

Some readers may be surprised at the modesty of these figures in the days of colossal circulations. But the influence of Cook's writings cannot be measured by these numbers. Under him the *Daily News* was a regular quarry from which a large number of provincial and other papers obtained material as they pleased. One editor of an important north-country journal sends Cook a very careful digest of "an able and lucid article" which had appeared in the *Daily News*, and indeed it may be said that Cook was from Bouverie Street conducting the policy and enriching the columns of a very large number of British journals. There is not much doubt that if he had been allowed to sit a little longer by his job he would have lifted the *Daily News* into a position not only of self-supporting solvency but even of profit.

## CHAPTER XI

### SALE OF THE "DAILY NEWS"

Cui lecta potenter erit res,  
Nec facundia deseret hunc nec lucidus ordo.  
Ordinis haec virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor,  
Ut iam nunc dicat iam nunc debentia dici,  
Pleraque differat et praesens in tempus omittat.

HOR. *De arte poet.* 40-44.

("He who chooses his subject according to his faculties will never want for eloquence or lucid arrangement of his material. Of this order the charm and virtue will be that the writer says now what needs to be said now and defers and omits other details till the proper time for them comes.")

THE end of Cook's work on the *Daily News*, as of that on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, came like a bolt from the blue. But in this case it meant the closing of his editorial record. He was still to do much journalistic work and to be of great service as a publicist, especially in the monthly reviews, to the Liberal Party. But he was never again to edit a paper and was thus excluded from influential and responsible work for which he was supremely, even uniquely, qualified. The first indication of the catastrophe is given in the Diary under date December 12, 1900:

A. Morley told me about a scheme to sell *Daily News* to a pro-Boer syndicate—"men with whom you will not be able to work". He put it on grounds: (1) *Daily News* losing money and he wanted to be quit of the whole thing; (2) Lord Ashton's violent pro-Boerism made the continuation of present conditions im-

possible. A. M. was forced to tell me (but now in strict confidence) because those who had been approaching me *re* a new Liberal weekly had also spoken to him, and he thought that might provide comfortably for me.<sup>1</sup>

During the next few days Cook gathered some broken lights of information from Sir John Robinson, who, however, would not say who the buyers were. He must have been reminded more than once of the *Pall Mall débâcle* eight years before. But the buyers, he was told, were "extreme men with whom Cook could not work". Indeed it was part of the bargain that Cook should be dismissed. The writer of this biography is interested to find that he also was contractually branded for the slaughter. The rest of the staff, it was thought, might be reprieved. To Mr. Herbert Paul, of course, the new *régime* would be congenial, but Mr. Alexander Paul, a very loyal and respected colleague, ultimately went with Cook.

It appeared from Sir John Robinson that the buying of the *Daily News* was only a variant of the idea started a year before by Mr. Massingham for a brand-new Liberal paper—a scheme very nearly consummated, as the advertisements of the new journal had been actually on order at the *Daily News*. At the end of December public interest in the event had begun to appear and letters of sympathy to arrive.

As I was so much involved in these events, the reader will perhaps excuse a slight personal reminiscence. I had been in blissful ignorance of the approaching calamity.

No sense had I of ills to come  
Nor care beyond to-day.

The evening before the blow descended I had told my

<sup>1</sup> This apparently refers to a proposed Liberal *Daily Graphic*, the editorship of which was offered to Cook. But the project fell through.

old schoolmaster what I was doing and how I hoped my present engagement with Cook would last for a quarter of a century. Late the following night Cook came into my room at the *Daily News*, stood with his back to the fire and to my great surprise asked me if I would go to South Africa. "Why should I go to South Africa? Was he not satisfied with my work?" Then came the news. "As for me", said Cook, "I am case-hardened; I have gone through all this before. But I'm afraid you, too, will have to leave with me". It was a very staggering shock which I took home with me that night to my lonely rooms (doubly lonely they seemed at Christmas time) in the old Temple court.

On the last day of the year Cook had a talk with Mr. Oppenheim which must again have recalled many similar heart-revelations by Mr. Henry Yates Thompson. The Diary thus records it:

H. O. came in to my room at five. He had signed on Saturday the preliminary contract for the sale of the paper. Many details were left to settle, but no doubt they would be settled, as the purchasers were very keen. They were Mr. Lloyd George, M.P., who acted for the syndicate—R. Lehmann, Cadbury, Leon and others. Arnold Morley and he had not been keen, and at first put them off. They came again and satisfied him and A. M. that they were solid. He whined and winced a good deal in telling his story. "I cannot tell you how much I feel it. I have been thirty-two years connected with the *Daily News*. I don't know what I shall do without it, and I agree entirely with your views, which you have expressed with so much ability and tact. If I had been a younger man I should have stuck to you, even if others disapproved, and have bought them out and taken the steps we have often discussed for putting the paper on a proper footing. But I am an old man and have not the strength, physical or moral, for that work, nor do I care to undertake the financial responsibility. I adhere absolutely to my principles, but it is a question of money. The Morley family are divided; Lord Ashton is very angry; the paper is costing

money. So you see there are reasons. Lloyd George asked that the *Daily News* should now take a neutral line on the war."

This, it will be noticed, is not quite consistent with the statement that the Imperialists were to be ousted from the staff. But Cook had not the slightest intention of becoming a stop-gap or compounding with his political conscience. He continues :

I said I could not on any account do their trimming for them. "You forget that I have my position and reputation to consider." "Oh, I did not promise Mr. George anything. It must be left to you. I merely tell you what they suggest. What Mr. Cadbury seems keenest on is the housing question, necessary for the stamina of the race. But that, I said to him, is exactly what Mr. Cook has done so much for. He knew that and said, 'We do not want to make any unnecessary changes. We only want a little give and take.' But you do not think you will work with them?" "Certainly not, and what I must press urgently on you is as soon as possible to give me my six months' salary in lieu of notice and let me go, for it is not pleasant to work on here with a halter round my neck and my tongue tied." He said they had not considered this matter—would do so when A. M. returned. He told me all this in confidence and hoped in any case this would make no difference to our friendly relations.

Other friends came along and "gloomed sympathetically" with Cook. In January Cook visited Lord Rosebery at Mentmore, where he met Rothschild and a certain jockey, the latter "a decent enough fellow". Cook, interested, as usual, in everything, reports Rothschild's tribute to the great jockey, Sloan: "A very able man, who would make his way in anything, also prepared to put you right in anything". Cook goes for a walk with Lord Rosebery, who on this and other occasions was very condolent. "It was a great pity Harmsworth was away. He did not believe it would have happened if he had been at home."

A curious little entry in the Diary is that for January 7 :

Dined with Hudson at the Continental. He was very nice. Said he had people on hand who would readily have bought the *Daily News* for the other side and at a much better price. Said he was surprised at their getting money from Cadbury. He had always failed. Cadbury used to say, "Liberalism is too high and sacred a thing for money. But I will pray with you". Probably Mr. Lloyd George had prayed.

The reader who wishes to know more about the manner and matter of Cook's journalism during this period should read carefully the two farewell leading-articles of January 9 and 10, 1901, which are reprinted at the end of the *Rights and Wrongs*. In the first he gives an invaluable *précis* of the policy of the paper on the South African question during the previous five years. "It has been presented, we hope, with courtesy and toleration. That it has been presented with intense conviction, we know. We would fain believe that it has been presented also with a constant reference to facts, and with an avoidance of any appeal to passion and prejudice". The most fanatical opponent could scarcely fail to admit at least so much in Cook's favour.

The first of these articles was a "Retrospect", the second a "Forecast". The latter dealt with the "New Liberalism" and revealed at a glance the sound and solid foundations of the faith which was known quite accurately as Liberal Imperialism.

In the solution of all Imperial problems there is a great part for Liberalism to play. The British Empire means nothing, or nothing good, unless it be built upon the principles of self-government, of equal rights, of political and commercial freedom. But if the Liberal Party is to take its proper part in the discussion and solution of Imperial problems, it must show itself in sym-

pathy with the national feeling at home and abroad ; and for this two things are necessary. One is a frank acceptance of Imperial burdens, and the other is the cultivation of a sympathetic tone and temper in approaching Imperial questions. The bias of patriotism may easily be carried to excess ; but the bias of anti-patriotism is worse. It is worse because it means loss of faith in that Imperial " trust and function " of which Mr. Gladstone spoke in his memorable Fourth Midlothian, and a party that has lost faith and hope can never be a true party of progress.

He combats the foolish idea that devotion to foreign and colonial questions necessarily means " stagnation at home ". " The eyes of a fool ", quoted Mr. John Burns with this implication not long ago, " are in the corners of the earth ". But the citizen of a great Commonwealth like the British is a much bigger fool who limits his interest and sympathy within the boundaries of these small islands. The reader should study all that Cook had to say on this question. Here we can print only a brief passage :

We want for a sane Imperialism a safe England, a just England, a right-doing England, a happy and contented England, and we may add a business-like England. It is to the Liberal Party that the nation and the Empire ought to look for the securing of these things. We want administrative and political reform to open yet more fully a free career to talent and to put the right men in the right places. We want a better system of education to equip British citizens more adequately for the keen industrial competition of these new times. We want industrial reforms which shall at once secure to the workers better conditions of life, and relieve the trade of the country from the losses caused by industrial warfare. Above all, we want social reforms which shall do whatever by Act of Parliament can be done to save little children from the terrible start in life which is the lot of too many of them, to rescue a large proportion of the people from the thralldom of drink, to provide the labouring classes with decent houses for their working life, and with homes

of honourable refuge in old age. An esteemed correspondent, Dr. Guinness Rogers, wrote an article the other day on what he called "The False Doctrine of the Anti". It is not enough, he meant, if we understood him aright, for Liberals to oppose and to destroy—not enough to be anti-Chamberlainite, or anti-this and anti-that. They must find also, and place before the country, a constructive policy of social amelioration. In so doing, they will be a patriotic party in the fullest sense of the term, for patriotism, as Ruskin teaches, is nearer to a vice than to a virtue unless the patriot strives to make the country of which he is proud happier, stronger and better.

As Editor of the *Daily News* Cook had lived up to these sentiments. He had concentrated especially on "The Cry of the Children", a phrase which came originally from Mrs. Browning. He published a large number of articles on the question of half-time and the school age in December 1898 and January 1899. These did much to educate public opinion on the subject, and in 1899 Robson's Half Timers Act was passed. The school age was raised to twelve, and in 1918 to fourteen. Other questions on which the *Daily News* specialized were unemployment and overcrowding. Early in 1899 seventeen articles appeared on the subject, "No Room to Live". It is far from true that Cook was an Imperialist who had his eyes fixed solely on the far corners of the earth. From the early days of his friendship with Toynbee he had always been alive to the need of social betterments and these subjects were never neglected under his editorships.

The last words Cook ever wrote as a responsible editor are contained in the last paragraph of these calm and dignified valedictions:

It is on these lines that we have endeavoured during the years permitted to us to conduct the *Daily News*. No one can be more conscious than the conductor of this newspaper of the meagre array which any accomplishment shows by the side of his oppor-



tunities. But there are occasions when it is permissible, perhaps, to avow one's aims and intentions. Our object, then, has been to keep steadily in view the larger interests and duties of the country as an Imperial Power, and to sink, in some measure, mere party considerations in the face of national emergencies. But at the same time we have tried—and, thanks to able writers and special correspondents, we have sometimes not wholly failed in the attempt—to criticize as it deserved the class legislation and administrative blundering of Lord Salisbury's Government ; to contribute on one or two occasions towards the solution of industrial strife ; to arouse public attention to social evils, and to promote social reforms. It is on these lines of "sane Imperialism" and social reform—and, as we believe, on no others—that the New Liberalism may hope to regain the commanding position of the Old, and to render effective service in its time to the country and the Empire.

About this time, when the purchase was complete, some of us went down one morning to Bouverie Street and found Mr. Lloyd George, the great War Minister that was to be, in possession of the office. Henry had broken into the spence with a vengeance and turned the monks, or a few of them, adrift. The emotions of those days are long ago spent, but in the retrospect one has to admit that it was perfectly fair war, and that, however painful it might be to lose congenial work and society and a good salary, we had no reason to complain. Certainly the financial obligations of the new and old proprietors were fully and even generously met.

Cook asked the writer to remain at work for a few weeks in order to avoid the danger of empty columns in the paper. Meantime the policy of the paper on war questions was to be as neutral as language could make it. I agreed, but strange things supervened. Mr. Clayden, an extreme pro-Boer and Little Englander, was appointed to act as temporary editor, and on the very first evening of my melancholy task I was summoned into his room

to answer for some delinquency. I had been writing a note on some event in the history of King's College, and had mentioned among other *alumni* of the College the name of Alfred Milner, nothing being further from my mind than any political allusion. I was told that name must now never be mentioned. To chronicle temporary events without alluding to such an important actor therein would have required some agility, but such were the orders. Moreover, as the evenings passed the policy of the paper became nothing like so neutral as language could make it. The temptation after so long a repression was too much for certain gentlemen on the staff, and, considering the passions involved, this is not surprising. I went to Cook in his retirement in Russell Square and told him the "carrying on" business was impossible, and that I must be liberated. Thus ended an epoch in our own lives and, I think, in the history of a great journal.

Many and sincere were the condolences Cook received on his severance from the *Daily News*. They came from all regions, the highest and the humblest. Lord Rosebery wrote (January 3, 1901):

You have sustained a cruel blow, but you have fought a good fight, and have kept the faith; indeed the blow has come on you because of that. Your friends and admirers will appreciate this. I, who am both, hold you higher and dearer than ever. As for your future, that is safe enough, and may be much more powerful and important from what we now deem a calamity.

As for the cause, which is after all our old friend "*Imperium et Libertas*"—that too may be the better. The air may be cleared; men may see the right path and pursue it. In the present, however, I do not deny that the heavens seem darkened by the vacancy in your "pulpit".

Still, people who take public affairs earnestly must expect to receive heavy blows and take them smiling. And you who have

had so much to endure in the *Daily News* office, and have borne it so bravely, will not now be less serene.

Mr. (afterwards Lord) Haldane wrote on the same day from Scotland :

What you tell me is a great misfortune for Liberalism. For yourself the position you have created and the name you have made in the country should put things straight before long. These are days in which men of really foremost rank are never left long sought after, and you have many friends.

Mr. Asquith wrote a line or two of "sincere regret", expressing a hope that the splendid service which Cook had rendered so long to the best type of Liberalism was only interrupted for a moment. "The party never needed it more". It is significant that from fellow-editors such as Mr. Buckle and Mr. Douglas Straight came messages of the warmest and most particularized appreciation. Mr. Buckle testified that the *Daily News* dealings with the South African question had been "of great—in some sense decisive—national importance". The Grand Old Man of Nonconformity, Dr. Guinness Rogers, wrote, too, letters characteristically warm and strong. "My interference", he wrote, "is prompted by my Liberalism and also by my sense of justice and my admiration of the great work you have done and are doing. I can speak the more freely because, as you know, I do not agree with all your views of South African policy". He had read Cook's valedictory leading article "with admiration and sympathy and with extreme indignation towards those who have brought about such a result". A letter from Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton contains the germ of Cook's volume on *The Rights and Wrongs of the South African War* :

Ever since this war your leading articles have been the greatest delight and support to all those who would fain be

staunch Liberals if the Liberals would let them. Your analyses of the sophistries, day by day, of the pro-Boers and your refutations of them have been so masterly that I feel you ought in justice to yourself as a writer to collect them in a volume. Mr. Swinburne asks me to say the same and to urge you to collect and reprint them. I feel sure that you could do so without any pecuniary loss, and they would be a possession indeed.

F. E. Garrett writes with a humorous suggestion that Cook of the *Daily News* and Massingham of the *Chronicle* should "change pulpits". That might indeed have been a satisfactory arrangement, involving the least amount of disturbance and suffering. But a very different arrangement ensued. Mr. Robertson Scott, a fellow-journalist, remarked that "if things go on as they have done this past year or two, newspaper men will have to ensure their incomes at Lloyd's".

Least expected, perhaps, of all tributes came from Mr. George Cadbury, who wrote expressing the great admiration for Cook's work on social questions. And not least welcome were the kindly messages from the composing room. On January 10 Cook received these lines :

We desire to express to you our great regret at your leaving the *Daily News* and to say how highly we hold you in our esteem and, if we may say so, in our regard. Your consideration for the Companionship, your courtesy to its members, your readiness to ease our labour whenever possible, have been and are appreciated by us. . . . You have been one of the best of Labour's friends, and not less its friend because your sympathy has always been tendered with judgment. We who have necessarily been your constant readers you have taught to take broad views, to hold intense convictions without letting their intensity lessen our courtesy or our toleration, and to qualify our judgment with a constant reference to facts.

The Companionship ended by hoping that Cook would always be "a force in British journalism". The

nature of Cook's reply may be gathered from a further letter from the composing room :

I beg to acknowledge your kind letter of yesterday. The Companionship read it with, if that were possible, increased respect for the writer, and I am to thank you for the enclosure, which, however, was not needed to commemorate your five years with us. Some of us will be better all our lives for the privilege of having worked with you. Your gift will be applied to the Fund from which we contribute to the trade charities, which lately have been heavily drawn upon.

May I add a word on my own account, less as a member of the Companionship than as one who has been helped not only to see clearly, but to the method of thinking clearly and judging fairly or with some approach to fairness by your writing ? But, indeed, I cannot say what I would. We shall all miss you because we cannot help it.

C. F. TOMS

(*Father of the Chapel*).<sup>1</sup>

There was also a little meeting and presentation in the composing room at the *Daily News*. Mr. Alexander Paul had the happy thought of taking down the departing Editor's speech on this occasion and sending it to Mrs. Cook :

MR. MURCH, MR. TOMS, AND GENTLEMEN—Words and time would alike fail me to express what I feel on this most unexpected and gratifying occasion. I say time would fail me, for I am in the middle—or, unfortunately, only beginning—my last leader for the *Daily News*. This, as we all know, is an age of machinery, and I suppose there is a tendency in newspaper offices, from the highest to the lowest, to regard every one as a mere machine, without any feelings worth consideration. But nothing has been a greater pleasure to me here than to feel that in some small way I was mixed up in human relationships, as it were, with those who were concerned in the production of the paper. I can

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<sup>1</sup> So the head of the composing room is entitled—a reminiscence, it is said, of those far-gone days when the first printing-presses were set up in chapels or churches.

truly say that the pleasantest quarter of an hour in my nightly work here is that which I spent at the end of this stone with Mr. Murch ; not only because my night's work is then over, but because I thereby gained the opportunity of coming into some sort of relationship with those engaged in the production of the paper. I have not words to thank you sufficiently for the exceedingly kind terms of the address which the father of the chapel read to me.

This of course is not in any sense a political occasion, and I do not mean to say anything about the political aspect here, beyond the expression of my extreme gratitude for one remark in your address, which discloses to me that, though some of you may have differed from me, you have recognized my sincerity and conviction. I think I may fairly claim, without undue boasting, that my journalistic career has shown that I am not one of those who are unprepared, at the call of duty, to make some sacrifice for the sake of principle. This, I think, will appeal to members of Trade Unions—for, as I understand, one of the highest and best qualities of the trade-union spirit is that it leads men to think more of their trade and their cause than of themselves. What I would venture to claim, leaving political and public matters apart altogether, is—and I hope you will not contradict me—that at any rate I have shown myself not to be inefficient in the workmanlike qualities of journalism. Perhaps I may add, lastly, that my handwriting—compared with that of some other members of the staff—might almost be called legible.

Now, gentlemen, time presses, and I must say a word which may not be more difficult to compose than any other—but which is more difficult than any other to say with the tongue. That word is “Good-bye”. Thank you most heartily, not only for this most gratifying address, but also for this most acceptable and useful token of your regard, which I shall ever cherish among my most valuable possessions.

And, not to continue unduly these quotations, a letter from the Headmaster of Winchester College (Dr. W. A. Fearon) must have especially lightened the gloom of these dark wintry days :

Jan'y. 11, 1901.

I hardly know whether friends ought to condole with you on your change of fortune. At first it looks like a second stroke of cruel luck ; but, though I don't know what your destiny may be, of course I can't doubt that you can command pretty well what position you choose. However, my main purpose in writing is to tell you with what joy and pride I have watched the line the *Daily News* has taken on public questions and the position to which you have raised it. I think we Wykehamists may well all feel proud of your doings in the last five years, and not least of your fine valedictory article of yesterday. May you quickly again find yourself in the commanding position which you ought to occupy.

But the "positions" of which Dr. Fearon speaks are not numerous or easy to command, and when Cook went abroad on January 25 for his unfailing anodyne of foreign travel his future cannot have seemed very assured. One opening, however, was available. Early in January, Mr. W. J. Fisher, Editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, had offered him a leader-writership on that paper. For such a position at least Cook must have felt that he had some qualifications.

## CHAPTER XII

### AS EDITOR AND JOURNALIST

Præclara est æquabilitas in omni vita et idem semper vultus eademque frons. ("Excellent is equanimity in every scene of life: a countenance and brow unchanged amid the changes of fortune.")—CIC. *De off.* i. xxvi.

THE severance from the *Daily News* ended Cook's record as a responsible editor. He was to have other offers of editorships—golden ones from South Africa, and in England of such papers as *Black and White*, a projected *Weekly Review*, and, a little later, strange to relate, of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to be run "on independent lines". In replying to the latter invitation on March 4, 1903, Cook summarizes his editorial record. "My main effort in journalism", he writes, "has been (1) to influence the Liberal Party in an Imperialist direction; (2) to support social reforms. The political causes which interested me most at the 'D.N.', after South Africa and other Imperial questions, were what I called 'No Room to Live' and 'The Cry of the Children'". He expresses his belief that "the competitive party system is necessary to the effectual working of the British political system". He has always been a party man and though having "often shown some independence", his sympathies are still with Liberalism. But he concludes, "Apart from other considerations I am not sure that I should



care to take the editorship of an evening paper again. I am at present very busy with other things"—meaning chiefly the monumental edition of Ruskin on which he was now engaged.

Cook was still to work for several years in daily journalism. But this is a convenient place to say a few words on his journalistic attributes, as my own opportunities of judging them fell in these last years of his editorial life.

Of all Cook's qualities that which my memory most vividly recalls was his equability. The task of bringing out a great paper six evenings in the week involves many worries and irritations, but I never remember Cook showing any signs of being either worried or irritated. In fact there was a wide range of emotions, such as anger and indignation, which I cannot recall that Cook often or ever exhibited. Only on one occasion do I remember seeing him in any way exalted or enthusiastic, and that was when Lord Roberts turned the tide of war in South Africa in the British favour. Even when the final blow fell Cook's "cheerful equanimity" was not seriously shaken. I can easily return in memory to the January evenings when he wrote those memorable valedictory articles, which, by the way, were not carefully prepared but written in the ordinary course of nocturnal journalism. I was in his room just as he finished the last words. "I'm a bit tired", was all he said as he rose from his chair. No one could have guessed, though probably he himself suspected, that he had just accomplished his swan-song as a responsible editor.

It was about one o'clock in the morning that Cook was wont to ascend from his quiet and rather awful sanctum to the region of noise and bustle in the composing room above, there to give the next day's paper its

final form. His serene presence was strikingly and almost rebukingly contrasted with the tumult there. It was like the appearance of a calm and confident commander on a field of hard-contested fight. I believe the printers and compositors had this feeling. Nothing testifies better to the respect, mingled with personal affection, with which he was regarded by his more mechanical but very important and responsible colleagues in the production of a daily paper than the letters, usually written at Christmas time or the New Year, which Cook received from the "Companionships" of his composing rooms. I have already quoted those received after the *débâcle*, but the normal and periodical messages from the upper regions show such a curious and correct appreciation of Cook's habits and temperament that a few more may be interesting :

"DAILY NEWS" COMPANIONSHIP,  
*January 1, 1899.*

DEAR SIR—Permit me on behalf of my colleagues and myself to wish you a Happy and Prosperous New Year. You have become so familiar to us by your nightly visits to our room that you have become almost as one of ourselves. We should sadly miss your calm and serene figure amid the tornado that nightly rages around us while in the throes of getting the paper to press.

To a philosopher there is much in our nightly experience to give rise to reflection ; and for any one with a sense of humour, much to amuse. But it cannot be a very amusing thing to fill our columns with just what that fickle jade, the Public, wants for her daily appetite, and you doubtless have many a bad quarter of an hour sifting the chaff from the wheat. Good luck attend your efforts in the year that has now commenced. In all you undertake, and in all you desire, both in business and in domestic life, may you be blessed with success.

For ourselves—well, sir, the New Year will be an interesting one. There will be need for Patience and Fortitude (the capital

letters are, I think, justified). But whatever be our experience, I am sure we have your good wishes.—Yours sincerely,

HARRY WHITEHORN  
(*Father of the Chapel*).

Another of these happily expressed letters is dated Christmas Eve 1900 :

DEAR SIR—I am desired by the Companionship to express to you their best wishes for your Christmas and New Year. If it be not presumptuous for the hand to address the head and the heart, we would say how glad we are to be the instruments of such wise thought as that which directs us. We cannot help taking pride in our Editor, and hope that all his efforts towards peace and goodwill among men and among nations may be blessed to himself.

But some wishes will not get themselves expressed. Will you take my desire to express them for the expression itself, and believe me, on behalf of the Companionship, to remain, with respectful regards,

C. F. TOMS  
(*Father of the Chapel*).

I have stressed a good deal the impassivity of Cook's temperament. But the reader must not picture in his mind a morose, solemn and insusceptible person. I should say that Cook's serenity was matched, and perhaps in some degree accounted for, by his sunny, light-hearted and invariable good humour. Cook had great depths of character, but laughter, like the ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα of the deep sea, was always at and near the surface. He usually allowed me to suggest my own subjects for notes and leaderettes, but I always submitted them to him before writing. Persisting trifles are sometimes of the essence of our memories, and the pleasant, reflective, encouraging smile with which he would assent to my choice, is still vivid to me. And it mattered nothing how busy he was when I, or any one else, broke in upon him. He could always "switch off" and resume without any flutter.

In fact, Cook's indisposition to worry or hustle sometimes set the nerves of contiguous persons on edge. I have seen him postpone the writing of his "leader" to an hour which seemed to imperil the very appearance of a paper next morning or at any rate a paper with adequately supplied editorial columns. Compositors might rage, printers stand waiting, railway trains in imagination move out, but Cook remained calm and irritatingly deliberate. Of course he was full of expedients. He had always, as is customary, some editorial material in reserve, and I remember how surprised I was one morning to find for the first time a "leaderette" of mine forming a paragraph in the conventional "three-decker". This, however, was only an emergency measure, though on the *Westminster Gazette* also Cook would sometimes resort to the composite leader.

I have wondered whether Cook's equability was more physical or philosophic. He had, no doubt, a touch of that "stoical pococurantism" which Carlyle tells us is characteristic of English youths of high birth or high education. At long last, perhaps, nothing really mattered. Such a creed may have its dangers. But it may also act as a sedative, while those who hold it are often apt to insist, with a sort of noble inconsequence, that certain things such as conscience and principle shall matter exceedingly so far as their own influence and example go. I detected something of this spirit in Cook. "The best preservation", he once wrote, "against the worry and responsibility of journalism is not to take the work too seriously". And he then quoted, as he was rather fond of doing, the reply which Mr. John Morley in his editorial days dictated to his secretary for transmission to a contributor who was excited about the non-appearance of some article he had sent in: "Write and tell him", said Mr. Morley, "that the world

moves even though his article does not appear, and that it would continue to move if the paper itself never appeared again”.

Under Cook's control the *Daily News* attained the highest ideals of daily journalism. With all his academic culture and literary interest the editor was no pedant. He accepted the conditions under which a modern newspaper is produced. He was not indifferent to the external form, and he always called in aid the picturesque and varied headline. Some of the more recent developments of the daily Press in the direction of a cruder sensationalism, the undue prominence, for example, given to the sordid dramas of criminal and divorce courts, he would not have approved or encouraged. He detested the spirit of commercialism which was invading the journalistic world, and he would have condemned some of the natural effects of that spirit. If the object of newspaper production is simply to make money, the one thing needful will be to indulge the public taste. The popular journal, I have heard it said, must hit the taste not simply of the busman but of the busman's wife. To cater for the public palate in this way, without any higher motive, means inevitably to degrade it. And if the process goes on indefinitely and unchecked, journalism may in time become as immoral, or non-moral, as that earth-born Fame who, according to Virgil, was :

Tam ficti pravique tenax quam nuntia veri.<sup>1</sup>

There is much that is disquieting and discouraging in modern journalism. A democracy is notoriously unable to choose its friends, and journalism gives to the bad man a means of acquiring a power and influence

<sup>1</sup> “As devoted to the false and the foul as to the publication of true news”.—*Aen.* iv. 188.

which otherwise he might not attain. Newspapers are published, and reach a large circulation, whose influence is steadily downwards. To hundreds of thousands in our country districts the sweepings of the criminal courts are served up regularly every week for Sunday consumption. Cook leaned by temperament towards hope and toleration. He often referred to these questions in his public addresses. Speaking to the Authors' Club he said: "I suspect that in many cases the alternative is not between reading the newspapers and reading no good literature but between reading the newspapers and reading nothing at all". Again, in his speech at the reopening of the Gladstone Library at the National Liberal Club (1917) he declared it was "probable that the newspapers are schoolmasters which bring a certain number of the great public to read other things". He was thinking here rather of the newspaper of the *Scraps* or *Cuts* type. But I am sure he would have agreed that the persistent reading of a certain class of newspapers of wide circulation is a devil's schooling of the worst sort, and that if the choice indeed lie between reading such papers and reading nothing at all the latter alternative is greatly to be preferred.

But, happily, commercialism is better in practice than in theory. The general results of the new spirit have been far less disastrous than the change as expounded by some of its promoters might have led us to expect. We have in this country a large and, let us hope, a growing body of taste and opinion which maintains a large number of daily papers of the highest character, and forbids even in our more popular and democratic journals too low an appeal to vulgar instincts and appetites.

Cook, though perhaps not very fond of journalistic *clichés*, was quite willing to compromise on these non-

essentials. A paper had to be readable and read. "Unless we are read to-day", he once said, "we shall never be read. Hence our straining after effect, our exaggerated emphasis, our damnable iterations, our headlines and our booms. Let us strive and scream for to-morrow we die". This, of course, is a humorous travesty of his own practice. Yet he had himself done very much to promote what was best in the New Journalism, and he neglected no legitimate device to lighten and brighten his daily numbers. For example, I remember his counsel that a leader or leaderette or general article should strike off on a note likely to arrest the attention. To take an absurd and extreme example, a new journalist drawing attention to the Report, say, of a Royal Commission on Devastation by Rats, would not begin, "The Royal Commission, etc., has just issued a valuable report which all who are interested in sanitation and domestic economy should carefully peruse". He would certainly begin with the word "Rats!" followed by other arresting vocables, and only when the reader's eye and brain were secured would he reveal the rather commonplace peg on which the whole screed was hung.

Cook's presence on a paper was sufficient to repel the more vulgar manifestations of journalistic modernism. But the journals he controlled were equally far from dullness or heaviness. Here is a passage from an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 9, 1912, written when Cook finally departed from daily journalism—a tribute the more weighty and valuable as coming from a fellow-craftsman :

Whether one agreed with its politics or not, the *Daily News* in Cook's hands became one of the most varied, coherent and altogether delightful papers ever published, well deserving the title of "the only organ" bestowed on it by its readers. There has been no happier union in recent journalism of political

instinct, fine literary judgment and interests, and an excellent news service combining to produce a paper that was always individual and amusing, and often brilliant, and that made itself a power in the land by the pungency, and not by the partisanship, of its leading articles.

It is quite a mistake to fancy that all that is best in modern journalism is due to what is known as the commercial spirit.

But Cook's most personal and distinctive gift as a journalist was his clear and clarifying mind. This has been again and again illustrated in preceding pages. It was his attribute from his earliest days, but it attained its highest and most effective expression in his long-continued exposition of the British case in the South African controversy in the editorial columns of the *Daily News*, and then in his book on the *Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War*. Through the months of that controversy, Cook gave to his readers day by day a simple and clear presentment of the situation as it then stood. The main issue was always cleared from the undergrowth of conflicting and confusing circumstance and made to stand out unmistakably in the foreground of the picture. In the *Pall Mall's* brilliant and appreciative analysis of Cook as a journalist, from which I have quoted, the critic remarks of the *Rights and Wrongs* that it

. . . summarises his special characteristics as a political journalist—his terse, flexible, sun-clear style, his candour and sense of proportion, his sustained power of close and cumulative argument, his admirable generalship in the disposition of chapters and paragraphs, and that quality of dry, dispassionate acuteness which seems more and not less judicial from being based on an avowed and reasoned belief in the righteousness of our side. Mr. Cook not only drove a broad and solid highway through the marshes and bogs of Boer and British diplomacy, but he made that highway positively fascinating for the ordinary wayfarer. He gave us a bird's-eye view of the tangled and confusing negotia-



tions that preceded the war, showing the bearing of each fresh move on the general situation and the hidden impulses that dictated it. What before was a blurred and bewildering chaos became under his treatment a consecutive narrative of keen and even exciting interest. Piecing the evidence together in stroke upon stroke of masterly precision, he summed up with a presentation of the British case that could not and cannot be answered, and is never likely to be bettered.

Though Cook was much in political society and was always ready to listen to suggestion and advice he owed very little to inspiration from without. I believe he could have conducted the whole of the South African negotiations in a satisfactory manner "off his own bat". He not only relied on facts but always went for his facts to original sources—blue-books, statutes, dispatches and other such documents. He acted on the principle that it is "*melius petere fontes quam rivulos sectari*". I am not sure that his powers of memory were at all exceptional. He would sometimes come into my room in the course of writing an article and ask me to help him to some stanza, it might be of Omar Khayyám or some other poet, which he required at the moment. But I never knew him to be at a loss for a fact or a political citation, and I never remember a single occasion on which he was caught out in a fault of inaccuracy or misinterpretation or unfair comment. And a very keen searchlight was thrown in those days upon each issue of the *Daily News*. Cook's line of argument and policy during the South African War was truly his own. Mr. J. L. Garvin described Cook, with much happiness and truth, as "the statesman among Journalists". But Cook was also a statesman among statesmen. He remarks in his Diary that his line on the *Daily News* was usually taken before any Liberal leader had spoken and thus "created a favourable atmo-

sphere " in advance. And, as already remarked, through the *Daily News* he conducted indirectly the politics of a large number of British journals and provided material for countless writers and speakers.

One of Cook's greatest services to journalism was his unfailing championship of its dignity and independence. At least twice in his own career he sacrificed livelihood and position at the bidding of conscience, and his support and sympathy were always with those who did likewise. When, at the end of 1899, Mr. H. W. Massingham parted from the *Daily Chronicle* in the same spirit, Cook, though differing widely from that well-known publicist on many first-rate questions, wrote :

In the present matter your courage in asserting and maintaining the most honourable traditions of our profession will, I am sure, command the admiration of every journalist. They certainly command mine, and I hope you will not mind my writing these few lines to say so.

Some years later I myself, for reasons still dark to me, was embroiled with my proprietors in that most precarious of all countries, South Africa. Cook wrote to me then :

Not knowing the particulars I cannot get to the heart of the latest row. But editors are born to such things as the sparks fly upward. Stick on, stand no unstandable nonsense, do the best you can under the circumstances for the right—and what more can one do ?

And in conclusion, I never knew any worker so completely master of his job as E. T. Cook. I am sure he would have approved Mr. Winston Churchill's idea of perfect happiness—a supply of clean paper, a good pen and an article commissioned to be written. I can still see him, with his quotations and other material at his hand and the ground-plan of his task mentally laid

down, beginning the composition of a leading article. He gave the impression of being completely "above his subject", and of making his points with equal ease and enjoyment. He never seemed to labour in composition or to make heavy weather of his work. Journalism was not to him, as to many, a mere *πάρεργον* or "side-show". He threw his whole personality into his editorial work, and laid under contribution all his vast resources of knowledge and culture and wisdom. We may hope that the tradition which Cook so courageously maintained will not be lost to our British journalism, and that the profession will still do honour and service to these high ideals and thus continue to attract men like Edward Cook into its ranks.

## CHAPTER XIII

### LITERARY WORK

Tentantem maiora fere, praesentibus aequum. ("Always striving towards higher things, yet content with the present.")—HOR. *Epp.* i. 17. 24.

SOME surprise may be felt that when Cook was excluded from a responsible position in journalism he should not have turned towards Parliament as an alternative sphere of work and service. Instead of this, he entered the more sequestered paths of literature. In this he exercised his own wisdom in his own behalf. The Liberal Party, to which he would have been attached, was hopelessly divided and defeated. Party politics offered no attractions in those days, and Cook, by declining parliamentary honours, avoided a large amount of wasted time and energy.

But, though editorships were no more to be his, Cook was not destined or intending to retire wholly from politics. For a good many years he exercised a very powerful political influence and did invaluable service to the Liberal Party by his contributions to the *Contemporary* and other reviews, by such works as his monograph on the "Foreign Policy of Lord Rosebery" and as leader-writer for ten years on the *Daily Chronicle*.

The parting from the *Daily News* was financially a serious matter for Cook who was not in a position to

forgo the income of regular professional work. The congratulations and commendations he received from all quarters were not convertible into solid cash for the payment of bills, and even Cook ran a risk, which others have not always so happily avoided, of being actually stranded. An entry in the Diary explains how the S.O.S. implied in Cook's position received its response :

Early in January, on our needs becoming known, Fisher of the *Daily Chronicle* had come over to the office (*Daily News*) and asked me to leader-write. I said I must have a holiday. As nothing else offered, on March 30 I wrote offering myself. After negotiations by letter and two interviews, I began work.

It appears from another entry that before Cook left the *Daily News* efforts had been made by a certain group of gentlemen to buy the *Daily Chronicle* with a view to making Cook the editor thereof. The proprietors had parleyed, but in the end demanded the prohibitive price of £400,000 (including, I think, *Lloyds' News*). It should be added incidentally that the price of the *Daily News* to its purchasers was understood to have been £100,000.

The writer remembers how shocked he was on returning from South Africa to find Cook sitting in a small room in Whitefriars Street and writing articles under the direction and correction of a superior authority. I had been so accustomed to work under "E.T.C." as a sovereign power that I could scarcely recognise him in a subordinate capacity, or imagine the sort of superman who should dare to wield the blue pencil over the offsprings of his skill and wisdom. But Cook himself accepted his new position with characteristic stoicism. He made no attempt to mitigate or disguise the fact that he was no longer a master but a servant. He was entirely free from personal conceit or affectation, and I am sure neither Mr. W. J. Fisher nor Mr. Robert Donald

had any cause to complain that he ever tried to overstep his new limitations. It sometimes appeared that Cook took an interest in observing in his own case, and yet from a quite detached point of view, how fortune could deal with a man who certainly gave her little pretext for ill favour. I believe he would have acquiesced *lento risu* in the darkest of fortune's frowns, so far as it affected his material interest and position.

Cook, in the excellent Horatian phrase, was "præsentibus æquus", quite willing and able to be happy under existing conditions. "I am jogging along comfortably enough", he reported to me in South Africa; "writing leaders for Fisher, also for the *Sunday Sun* (which is the one professedly Liberal Imperial organ, but a poor concern). It is a very easy way of making one's living, and when I am lazy I rejoice in the leisure and absence of all worry and responsibility. At other times I pine for opportunities".

The *Chronicle* of those days, with its modern "commercial" spirit and a rather lukewarm Imperialism, was not entirely congenial. Perhaps no man who had been accustomed to command in a newspaper office could have succeeded so well as Cook in obeying for a long ten years of service. He knew that party loyalty always involves some compromise, and the sacrifices he had to make on the *Chronicle* were not more than could have been expected. On essentials Cook at no time would have been willing to compromise. Yet the loss of self-determination and the want of complete agreement with a policy which was not so strongly Imperial as Cook could wish prompts, I think, exactly two bitter comments, and no more, in his Diary. On one occasion he is offended at a "sickening" opportunism in policy, and on the other he expresses "anger and humiliation" when his leading article was "unmercifully and crudely mangled". It

is no reflection upon the able editors under whom Cook worked to say that his position, considering his great record and reputation, must have been a trying one and called for all that wonderful patience of which he was master.

In June 1903 Cook suffered a blow compared with which all vicissitudes of material fortune must have seemed of small account. The death of his wife was a stroke from the staggering effect of which he never completely rallied. The unsociable man is often the most domestic. Cook courted and made few friends, and he was the more devoted to and dependent upon a wife who had been also his truest friend, comrade and helper. Most readers will know the delightful guides to London which Mrs. Cook (E. C. Cook) wrote partly in joint authorship with her husband,<sup>1</sup> of which we find Cook preparing further editions when his wife had gone. Of this grief, too, Cook repressed all outward manifestation, reserving for his own intimate Diary any utterance thereof. Many a broken and poignant sentence therein reveals the unhealing wound. The Diary, as might be expected, becomes during the next few years subject to long interruptions. A new attempt to pick up the threads under date December 10, 1905, contains a passage which for E.T.C. is strangely elegiac :

To-day walked my usual longer round to Mongewell—very sunny and frosty. Sun went down behind Streatley Hill, as I came back. Full moon opposite. When the fire of love and gold of happiness die, there rises the cold orb of duty, with some faint rosy streaks cast around it from the sunken sun.

With the ending of the *Daily News* editorship the

<sup>1</sup> *Highways and Byways in London* and *London and Environs* (with special chapters on the British Museum, the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and South Kensington, by E. T. Cook).

political interest also of the diaries naturally diminishes. Cook is less able to help and is accordingly less courted by political personages. He still frequents political salons and dining-rooms and duly records the conversation. His friendship with Lord Rosebery remains unabated, and through his active membership of the *Liberal League*, which grew out of the Liberal Imperial Council early in 1902, he was in constant touch with the "Vice-Presidents", Mr. Haldane, Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey and the other protagonists of the Imperial tabernacle in the Liberal camp. That party was in a truly parlous state. There were constant searchings of heart over Lord Rosebery, whose "in and out" policy, and Achillean habit of shouting from the ramparts (Chesterfield, Burnley and the like) and then diving under canvas once more, seems to have caused as much irritation as the earlier and original example of the sort in the Grecian army under the walls of Troy. In the retrospect it is difficult to discover what Lord Rosebery was really expected to do.

A curious note to history is contained in Cook's report of Mr. Chamberlain's table conversation at a dinner in May 1901. The Secretary of State for the Colonies remarked that

. . . Rosebery had often had the ball at his feet—*e.g.* after the "predominant partner" speech. If he had stuck to that, his future would have been certain. We leaders were far too committed, but he would have captured our followers. I was asked to speak soon after. I waited to give my decision to see. If he had stuck, I should not have spoken—should have had nothing to say. As soon as he explained away, I wired, "Yes, I will speak".

It may be questioned whether Rosebery, if he had "stuck", would have promoted any better the unity of the Liberal Party. History may perhaps never



trouble herself about the family feuds in the Liberal Party of these days. Unity was secured in the end by the fusion of the tabernacles, or, perhaps more correctly, by the absorption of one tabernacle by the other, the "Vice-Presidents", to the astonishment of some people, accepting office under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. One service, at any rate, was rendered by these statesmen. Lord Rosebery and his lieutenants, Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Haldane and others, gave eloquent and abiding expression to sentiments which were at once Imperial and Liberal. They were the exponents of an Imperialism freed from any vice of megalomania or the "Asiatic" proclivities of Lord Beaconsfield. It was an Imperialism in correspondence with the attributes of a "free, tolerant and unaggressive Empire", and being such, we may wonder that it proved rather a battlefield than a common ground of agreement among all sections of the party.

During the few years following the *Daily News*' downfall, Sir Alfred Milner was an unfailing visitor of Cook's during the great pro-consul's vacations from his South African task. On one occasion Cook places at his friend's disposal Rose Cottage, the pretty little retreat near Reading which he had acquired. Though his visage may have been, in the phrase of Balzac, "impassible comme ceux des diplomates", Milner's conversation was always frank and unreserved, and Cook's record of these visits throws light on events and persons in the moving South African scene. One of these visits occurred soon after Sir Alfred had received his peerage, which seems to have been offered quite suddenly by the King in the course of a conversation with His Majesty. Milner had been offered this high honour before, but had preferred and accepted instead a G.C.B. And when he was ennobled there were difficulties.

Would residence in chambers, suitable enough for an unmarried commoner, be "seemly" in a peer of the realm? Cook had no answer to this. "The danger", he said, "is guinea-pigging—you must set a new departure", which Milner dutifully undertook to do. Cook was happy in the friendship, and even the companionship, of many of the choicest spirits of his times. But no one who knew something of his inmost thought and feeling could fail to be aware that Milner of all men living was for him the highest moral and intellectual exemplar. Certainly no public man ever enjoyed a more powerful, constant and whole-hearted support than Milner received from Cook during his long day's work in South Africa.

But though Cook as a prolific writer in the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Sunday Sun*, for which latter paper he also wrote leaders, continued his interest and influence in politics, his main and most congenial task was now literature. It was early in 1902 that the first reference to a great edition of the works of Ruskin appears in his Diary. For ten years that task was to have the first and biggest call on his time and energy. Cook's fellow-editor was Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, K.C., one of Ruskin's most trusted friends and his literary executor. Mr. Wedderburn had much material to bring to the joint stock. He had himself edited some of Ruskin's books and had constructed invaluable indexes to the most important. On his side Cook had the accumulated fruits of a persistent study which had begun in his early years. He had attempted an index to some of Ruskin's books so far back as his Winchester days and his earliest published book was entitled *Studies in Ruskin*. Mr. Wedderburn's material, considerable in extent, was placed at Cook's disposal. The normal method of procedure was for the editors to meet

twice a week, on which occasions Cook would submit for Mr. Wedderburn's approval the use he proposed to make of the latter's material, proofs also being subsequently sent. Mr. Wedderburn cannot recall an occasion on which there was anything like a serious difference of opinion between him and his collaborator.

When the work on the edition really set in Cook took the "labouring oar" and spared himself not at all. The devotion of the ten best years of his life to this edition of the entire *corpus* of Ruskin's production has often been criticized. So also has the edition itself, which has been described as a monument indeed, but one under which Ruskin is buried. It is possible that Cook scarcely realized when he undertook this colossal task the amount of work it would involve. The financial terms were certainly not very attractive. I was myself surprised at their moderation. Many a person obtains for a second-rate novel as much as Cook for these thirty-nine volumes and the immense labour they represent. Yet there is no reason to think that Cook ever regretted the Ruskin enterprise. It was in truth a labour of love, and Mr. Wedderburn testifies to the amazing industry which Cook expended upon it, and to his determination, never relaxed to the last word in the last volume, to make the edition a perfect and final monument.

Mr. Wedderburn relates how Cook would think nothing of working with him from 10 to 1; then, after an hour for lunch, from 2 till 7; and then after dinner going down to the *Daily Chronicle* for, in the most practical sense, his real day's work. "Pegging away at Ruskin" becomes almost a monotonous entry in these years' diaries. Cook notes on one date in 1909 that he had finished "colour" for the index—this one word involving more than a week's labour. The work, indeed, was Herculean. The edition was to include every word

ever written by John Ruskin, who, as Mr. Frederic Harrison has said, wrote more than any three leading British thinkers put together. Measured simply by the arithmetical tables, the work breaks all records. It forms a block of books nine feet long by ten inches high, "formidable", remarked Cook, "even as a piece of furniture". All this huge literary area Cook surveyed and mapped out with scrupulous care. The notes were Cook's own composition, and we may imagine the days and months and years of burrowing and probing in the British Museum involved in that business. "Ruskin", says Cook, "wrote about everything—mountains, rivers, lakes and clouds; geology, minerals, flowers; birds and snakes; about architecture, painting, sculpture, music, drawing, cookery, political economy, education, poetry, morals, mythology, history, socialism, theology, coins, manuscript. He ranged from Monmouth to Macedon, from Giotto to goose-pie. The index to his works might compete with Mrs. Beeton for the title 'Inquire within upon everything'".

Every allusion, literary or artistic or geographical, had to be explained and traced to its source, however occult and remote. Cook tells us he kept most of the tickets returned for the books he took out in the British Museum, and he found that in six years they indicated an appalling total of 10,000 volumes. Many a footnote, we learn, represented a search through twenty volumes and the labour of half as many hours. The brain aches even at the record of this relentless toil. In the end every allusion, save one,<sup>1</sup> was duly tracked home, and

<sup>1</sup> Some lines, greatly admired by Ruskin, representing a man in despair who desires that his body may be cast into the sea,

"Whose changing mound and foam that passed away  
Might mock the eyes that questioned where I lay".

I believe the place and authorship of these lines remain undiscovered.

the wonder of this can be appreciated only by those who know something about Ruskin's "esoteric allusiveness".

It has been suggested that a select and representative rather than a complete edition of Ruskin would have been more useful and appropriate. But Cook was a Ruskinian as some admirers of Wordsworth are Wordsworthians. He quoted with approval the dictum of the German critic, Engel, that Ruskin "has never written anything worthless or unimportant". Nevertheless the editors had in view the desirability of an edition of selections and but for the Great War this enterprise would have been carried out.

"Cook", says Mr. Wedderburn, summarizing his impressions of his collaborator, "was the embodiment of quiet wisdom and most amazing industry". The index to the edition is itself a monumental achievement of the latter virtue. Cook was an expert on the index. "The Art of Indexing" is the subject of a curiously interesting paper in his first volume of *Literary Recreations*. "If I were despot", he writes elsewhere, "I should chop off the heads of the only two sets of criminals who are unforgivable—authors who issue books without an index and directors of galleries and museums who alter their numbers". Cook certainly lived up to his principles herein. The indices and appendices to all his books are models of convenience and completeness.

The great *Life of Ruskin* was wholly Cook's work and grew naturally out of the biographical introductions to the thirty-nine volumes of the edition, which were also from his pen. The *Life* was published in 1911, the year before the last and index volume of the edition.

The following letter from Mrs. Arthur Severn shows

how the edition and biography satisfied those most deeply interested :

DEAR MR. COOK—I feel much touched by your kind letter, and it is a real joy to be able to give *you* any pleasure, for nothing we can ever say or do would rightly express our gratitude and appreciation of the wonderful work you have done for my beloved cousin's new edition. I feel sure no one else could have done it so splendidly, and I feel it is a great memorial to you as well as him, and in all this I know Mr. Wedderburn keenly sympathizes.—Ever gratefully and most sincerely yours,

JOAN RUSKIN SEVERN.

But the edition and the *Life of Ruskin* do not, as has been said, complete the tale of Cook's industry during these years. He was not only, down to the end of 1911, earning his livelihood in daily journalism, but keeping abreast of the home, Imperial and foreign politics of the day as perhaps no other man living. He was contributing on literary, but mainly on political, subjects to the *Contemporary*, *National*, *Quarterly*, *New Liberal*, *Monthly Reviews* and to the *Strand*, *Pall Mall* and *Universal Magazines*. His political articles show a quite amazing knowledge of contemporary politics. They are all easy and pleasant to read, but their range and elaboration, the way in which the argument is enforced by fact and by quotation for which chapter and verse are always accurately given, imply an amount of study and an industry in the gathering and marshalling of material which are truly thaumaturgic when we remember the other calls upon Cook's time and strength.

And even this is not all. In the very thick of the *mêlée*, if the word be appropriate to Cook's unceasing toil, he finds time to write a substantial memoir to be laid on the grave of his beloved friend, Edmund Garrett, who died May 10, 1907. "And now", he writes, after

recording the struggle over "colour" in the index, "I must really switch myself off to F. E. G."

What cranny of leisure was left for many lectures on literary and artistic, mainly Ruskinian, subjects and for assiduous attendance at the Liberal League, the Liberal Colonial Club (largely his own creation) and the Victoria League the reader must conjecture for himself. It is convenient here to proceed with Cook's great biographical undertakings. In 1913 appeared his *Life of Florence Nightingale*. The subject cannot have been entirely congenial to Cook as the material consisted so largely of hospital and sanitary detail. Cook showed great skill in dealing with this, "without swamping", in Mr. J. A. Spender's words, "the portrait of the woman or her mission to the Crimea". Cook's wonderful industry and precision are once more visible in the exhaustive appendices to the book which is indeed, like all these biographies, a final, satisfying and continuously interesting memorial to its subject.

The best review of the book is contained not in a newspaper but in one of those extraordinarily live and brilliant letters Cook has preserved from Mrs. Carruthers, C.H. (*née* Miss Violet Markham). She writes on Aug. 8, 1915:

I wanted to write and tell you how thrilled I have been by your *Life of Florence Nightingale*, and send you my warmest congratulations on such a fine piece of work. I don't know when a book has engrossed me more. It's a long book, but I can tell you honestly that I did not find one dull or unnecessary line in it. I can't say how Florence Nightingale's personality laid hold of me, and the host of speculation to which your brilliant study gives rise. She must have been an awesome old woman—she never was young so far as I could gather—and that sense of mission (always rather a ponderous thing) conflicts oddly with the humour and raciness of the letters. What an intriguer too—her rigging of Royal Commissions from that back bedroom must have made Beatrice Webb green with envy. And that

retreat to the back bedroom and the cutting adrift from her intolerable family, especially the intolerable sister.

But what a life! Never have I read a book which brought home to me so fully the truth of Madame de Staël's words, "Fame for a woman is splendid mourning". Men do achieve success and fame so much more easily than women. They don't have to retire to back bedrooms to do it. A famous man doesn't find his work incompatible with family and even social ties. But our women of genius—what tragic figures they are—Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Florence Nightingale! She must have been a very difficult woman to deal with, and I expect even her tiresome mother and sister had a bad time of it with her on occasions. What a "down" she has on marriage. I expect the dear darling nurses shook in their shoes when they fell away from grace into matrimony, and had to break the news to the dear mother! That is a very painful line you quote, "Happiness, thou destroyer and corrupter of men". I believe that point of view is profoundly untrue, and one feels the sort of warp for which it stands running through the woman's whole life.

It is difficult to sum her up—she is so fine and in parts so repellent. Her friendship with Jowett interested me enormously. Years ago I had speculated as to the personality of the unknown correspondent who figures so largely in his life. Well—please let me add my thanks for the very great interest and pleasure I have had from your gift. It is a most stimulating book and makes one stand and deliver over and over again.

But Cook's most perfect literary product is unquestionably his *Life of Delane*—"the best book", to quote Mr. Spender once more, "ever written about a journalist". Here, indeed, was a congenial sitter for a biographical portrait, a subject with whom Cook was in full sympathy. The two great editors, though differing in character and temperament, had much in common. They held largely the same views on the *morale* and methods of journalism, and both made a constant and courageous stand for the independence of the profession.



There are many autobiographical touches in this study. A rather cryptic passage on page 262 seems to require illustration. "A capitalist with large resources", we read, "once asked an editor of some experience to say wherein the secret (of journalistic influence) consists. 'I see my way to getting large circulation, but how am I to get influence? Tell me that'. What the editor said in that particular case does not concern us here". The capitalist, it may not be indiscreet to explain, was Lord Northcliffe, the editor was Cook, and what the editor said was, "By not suppressing the leading article". Cook did not approve the extreme "commercial" idea of a newspaper as a mere purveyor of news. His own best work had been done in the "leader" or editorial columns, and he was no friend to reducing the comparative space allotted to these. He comments also on the disadvantage suffered by an editor who, like Delane, does not write. "Of course", he adds, "no conceivable editor could write all the leading articles in *The Times* or in any other of the morning papers as they used to be; but many an editor has written one a day, especially at critical times". An editor may exercise all the possible safeguards of initiative, selection, instruction and revision, but the policy for which he is himself responsible can never be fully his own unless its literary expression is mainly the work of his own hand. This mediation of another brain and temperament results in "endless scrapes and contradictions", as Delane says, which might otherwise have been avoided. No editor, of course, can avoid these misadventures over the whole range of his responsibility. "Even the most diligent of editors", writes Cook, "sometimes find it impossible to exercise complete control over articles which they do not themselves write", and, of course, there must

be many such. Cook's letters contain many from aggrieved persons who evidently thought he was personally and deliberately responsible for the offence. On all these occasions Cook, without of course betraying any colleague, was careful to point out the conditions under which an editor works and to make the most honourable amends.

On another page Cook has some words on that "sensation - mongering", which, under extreme competitive conditions, is, and apparently must be, the besetting vice of modern journalism. "A journalist", he writes, "who adopts what are called sensational methods is naturally suspect. They are methods which are sometimes profitable to the journal, but they are not the only methods by which a journalist of influence can bring weight to bear upon the course of affairs". One of the greatest triumphs ever scored by a journalist was Mr. Frederick Greenwood's inducement of the British Government to buy the Suez Canal shares. But this was not effected, as Cook reminds us, by shrieking captions in Mr. Greenwood's paper, but "quietly and behind the scenes". "If the editor adopt the noisier way", Cook proceeds, "with incidental disadvantage to the public interests, when another and quieter would or might have attained the same end, he must expect to find his motives questioned". Cook might also have referred to the ennui and irritation with which this hysterical and sensational mood, too persistently maintained, afflicts the general reader. "When Delane spoke out", adds Cook, "he spoke not as a mere journalist catering for curious appetites, but as a public man more than ever convinced that the best, perhaps the only, cure for incompetence and mismanagement was publicity". Very sound doctrine is much of this for the journalism of our days.

Delane and his biographer held identical views on maintaining the dignity and detachment of the Press. Neither editor would ever have paid for "official news by official views". Many important personages in Cook's editorial days, as in Delane's, thought that for "so much exclusive information given, so much political support was due". "Delane respected his calling too much to stoop to any such bargaining", and so also did Cook. As this memoir incidentally shows, Cook was in the closest and most familiar communion with many of the main actors in the politics of his day. But he never became anybody's man. Like Horace, he was "nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri".<sup>1</sup> He maintained an unfettered independence. Again and again in his writings he insists that an independent support of a party is not simply the only honest but the only effective form of support, and the only form which profits the journal itself. A newspaper which, it is known, will support a certain group or party *per fas et nefas*, can never be very attractive or interesting because it fails to excite "curiosity". There is an apriorism about its opinions which relieves many people from the necessity of buying it.

Cook, then, was all for "independent support", but this did not mean a neutral or non-party position. The reader may recall what he said in a letter replying to an invitation to return to the *Pall Mall Gazette* as editor on independent lines. "Apart from my opinions", he wrote, "it seems to me that an independent journal which *leaned to* (a very different thing from *adhering rigidly to*) neither side and to no organized group or party would not be a very influential organ". I have italicized the careful words in which Cook distinguished between the out-and-out party attitude from that kind

<sup>1</sup> "Not bound to swear as any one master dictates".—*Epp.* i. l. 14.

of free championship which he himself always accorded to the Liberal Party, and which, as he again and again insisted, is the only support worth giving and getting.

But, indeed, to say that Cook was "independent" in his views and policy is an understatement of the case. As has been pointed out, he was much more generally giving than receiving suggestions, more often leading than following. So far from awaiting orders from the hierarchy it was rather the Cabinet which, at any rate at one great and prolonged emergency, was wont "to wait and see what Cook said" before a decision was formed.

"Commercialism" as an exclusive and dominating motive was anathema to Cook. On this subject, of which much has recently been heard, he writes a page or two in his moderate, unemotional way in the *Delane*. Here is a characteristic passage, well worth noting for thought and style :

Lord Palmerston, in a letter to Queen Victoria upon the elements of journalism, laid it down that every newspaper is essentially a commercial enterprise. And so, with rare exceptions, it is ; the cases are few and far between in which a newspaper survives for any considerable space of time, and maintains a position of large influence, without being a commercial success. Much the same may be said of other comparable activities. The doctor, the lawyer, the author, looks to receive pecuniary reward, as well as the proprietor of a newspaper, or a mill or a store. Yet there is a vital difference between what Ruskin called "the fee-first man" and those to whom the fee is not the entirely dominant consideration. A man of push and go was once asked to describe a newspaper. A newspaper, he said, is a means of making money, and a ridiculously easy means to any one who thoroughly masters the tricks of the trade. The proprietors of *The Times*, I am sure, would have disclaimed altogether such an account of the matter, and to a large extent they might have done so with perfect sincerity. The members of the Walter family with whom successively *Delane* had to do, kept, indeed,

a close scrutiny, I do not doubt, upon the balance-sheet, and the editor's influence would, I dare say, have waned if the balance had been on the wrong side. But, on the other hand, if any question had arisen between making more money in the one scale and losing some dignity in the other, the answer would have been given on the better side ; there would have been no inclination to take the cash and let the credit go. The owners of *The Times* took an honourable pride in the paper, and had the kind of feeling for its traditions which is cherished in the case of many an old-established business or ancestral estate. The conditions of newspaper enterprise at the present day are different, and though there are some survivals of the older tradition, another order of ideas is in the ascendant.

In these successive biographies Cook set a standard of thoroughness and fidelity to truth to which future practitioners may find it difficult to attain. Certainly he enriched our libraries with permanent works of high literary and spiritual value.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LAST TASK

Denn wo das strenge mit dem zarten,  
Wo starkes sich und mildes paarten,  
Da giebt es einen guten Klang.

(“Where the strong and the tender, the mild and the stern are blent,  
then rings the metal true”).—SCHILLER, *Lay of the Bell*.

WE must now resume the narrative of events in Cook's life. We read in his Diary under date July 25, 1911, this entry: “Last night on coming home to supper and leisurely opening letters found one giving me three months' notice!” The next day it appeared that Cook's time would be extended to the end of the year. At first there were vague promises of occasional work after the year's end, but it soon became evident that these were only in the nature of shock-absorbers and at last in December that Cook's departure was to be of the bag and baggage kind. A gentleman from Nottingham had been engaged in his place. “Toujours Nottingham”, exclaims Cook on hearing this, for an appointment from Nottingham had been “the beginning of the end” at the *Daily News*. No light is thrown by the Diary on the motives which prompted the dismissal of a man who had rendered such great service to the paper and might well have seemed to many people irreplaceable. But there had been differences of opinion, e.g., on the “two-power standard”, and, moreover, Cook's position on the *Chronicle*, though it had lasted

ten years, had always been in some degree anomalous. But the forces of change often act mechanically, and time manages to dispense with the most indispensable persons and institutions. Economy and reorganization had become necessary, and Cook was perhaps regarded as an expensive and ornamental appendage. Anyhow, December 30, Cook's last evening at the *Daily Chronicle*, was also his last in daily journalism. He was once more, this time finally, dismissed from a profession whose status he had done perhaps more than any man living to raise and to maintain.

Cook's departure from the *Chronicle* was the occasion of another chorus of tribute and appreciation not only from private friends but from the *British Weekly*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and many other papers. And also that official recognition which seems to be bestowed so capriciously and was certainly much overdue in Cook's case was now on the way. "I have the pleasure of proposing to you, with the King's approval", wrote Mr. Asquith on June 8, 1912, "that, on the occasion of the forthcoming celebrations of His Majesty's birthday, you should receive the honour of knighthood". Cook was abroad when this letter arrived, so that the announcement of his honour was not included in the birthday list, but separately a few weeks later.

So in the Diary, under July 1, we read :

Dressed at tailor's, got to Buckingham Palace 10.50 (20 minutes late) and advised by flunkeys to hurry up, but I saved so many minutes' wait. Paish was nearly as late. We were marshalled in our several groups in Picture Gallery. Then single file into Throne room, a Court official giving each in turn a civil piece of advice as to how to kneel. The whole thing managed very well and quickly. Drove away with Paish.

Never was an honour better deserved and never was the desert more fully and generously recognized

in the organs of public opinion. A public dinner was given in his honour at the Hotel Cecil on July 26, at which Lord Morley presided and the whole journalistic world was represented. Few journalists have ever been so honoured by their fellow-craftsmen. Lord Morley made one of his most humorous and delightful speeches. He reminded his hearers that he had been Cook's first editor. Their guest had dignified public discussion and had brought into rather coarse affairs—if he might use the word without disrespect to Parliament—a spirit of cultivation and refinement. He had the gift of sincere argument, and while he argued sincerely and firmly from his own point of view—which had not always been the chairman's—he did perfect justice to the arguments of other people. Sir Edward Cook had been a downright good fighter who had shown untiring industry and perfect modesty. He was also blessed with a sense of humour, and had devoted years of faithful and pious industry to presenting to the world in the best form that was possible the works of one who was his master.

The journalist, Lord Morley went on to say, is actuated by superior and inferior motives. Happy was the man who, when the balance was struck, found that on the whole the superior motives weighed in the scale. Their guest was one of those happy men, and they all honoured him for it. They all knew that he had not allowed inferior motives to overpower superior motives, and they all knew that he had made sacrifices of material interests, which, after all, were something, so that these motives might not overpower his sense of duty and responsibility in advocating causes which, in his own view, were for the advantage and common good of the nation.

Lord Morley did not forget to protest against the sensationalism, the “ flaming, garish colours, the dashing



emphasis, the Brobdingnagian attempts in type of all kinds", which mark the most up-to-date newspapers. To this new spirit he was inclined to attribute some of the restlessness of modern life. "I don't mind who writes the leading articles", said his lordship, "if you will give me full control of the black type and the headlines".

Cook's reply was pleasantly reminiscent. Acknowledging his first editor's tributes, he happily quoted Dr. Johnson's remark, "It is not for me to bandy compliments with my sovereign". One of his best anecdotes referred to a conversation once held between Mr. Gladstone and Lady Stanley. The two were comparing notes as to their physical weaknesses and the great statesman confessed to being rather deaf. To this Lady Stanley replied that, while not suffering from deafness, she had at times great difficulty in finding the right word to express her meaning. "That", replied Mr. Gladstone, "is a weakness of which I have never been suspected".

The best that a journalist could do, concluded Sir Edward Cook retrospectively, would for the most part serve only the passing hour, but there were occasional opportunities of striking a blow for some cause in which one greatly believed, for endeavouring to lead and not merely to follow public opinion; these were the opportunities which the journalist who respected his calling really prized, and which added dignity and solace to the daily "tale of bricks".

A private letter received two days later from the old editor of more than a quarter of a century ago must have been among the most gratifying of the countless tributes Cook received at a time whose happiness was only clouded by the regret that one who would have shared and rejoiced in the honour had passed away :

WIMBLEDON PARK,  
*July 28, 1912.*

MY DEAR COOK—Your kind letter has given me the greatest pleasure. It was a true gratification to me to bear a part in recognizing the worth of an admirable worker in an important craft, and a thoroughly upright man into the bargain. The gathering was, I believe, held to be a great success in every way. It was a delight to *me* to “testify”.

With cordial good wishes I mean to remain,

MORLEY.

From an old friend and antagonist of the Union days comes this :

*July 26, 1912.*

MY DEAR COOK—May I just write you a line to say that if I had not been bidden to a Royal feast to-night which I cannot escape, I should certainly have done myself the pleasure of applying for a place at the banquet to be given to you in recognition of that well-deserved honour which no one observed with greater pleasure than—Yours sincerely,

CURZON.

From regions nearer Bohemia the following letter is pleasurably greeted and preserved :

*June 24, 1912.*

DEAR SIR E. T. COOK—I wonder whether the ocean of life and death that has rolled between us since we last met has wiped me entirely out of your memory. But even if it has there is no reason why I should stifle the impulse to express the deep pleasure the newspapers have given me this morning. Among all the honours that have lately been awarded there is none, I think, quite so well deserved as that which has fallen to you. Apart from the perennial delight that your life-work upon Ruskin has given me, I have, for entirely other reasons, been for many years following you, in the columns of the various journals in which you have written. I think I could spot your style anywhere, but I know I could spot the unmistakable note of plucky honesty which characterizes all that you write.

I feel that Swinburne is a link between you and me. We

often talked about you, especially about your fearless attitude in connection with the Boer War, an attitude which Swinburne used to call heroic.—Yours very sincerely,

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

To Miss Markham, who had written her felicitations, Cook replies :

ROSE COTTAGE, SOUTHSTOKE, READING,  
August 2, 1912.

Your letter pleased and touched me more than I can say. Yes—I did feel a little proud of such evidence of goodwill and esteem as was forthcoming in the dinner—and I feel the same, and much pleasure also, at the knowledge that I have won your friendship and esteem. The sympathy and understanding in your letter are very comforting. Would that I could attain to the same surety of faith that shines through your words and that must be so great a solace to you in your grievous loss. Yet something of it I cling to and strive after, and there are moments, especially when sympathy of other souls in this present life comes home very vividly, when everything falls into harmony.

It was rather an ordeal having to speak for at least half-an-hour (as I was asked to do) at the dinner. If I had said all that was in my mind, I could never have said it! What a bull, but you will understand—so I took refuge for the most part in pleasantries, though with serious words here and there. And the speech, I was relieved to find, went down well—did not fall flat at all I think, even after Lord Morley's charming discourse. But really—what about my "modesty"?

The nicest things about the occasion were the widely representative character of the gathering and the feeling of *esprit de corps* and goodwill which it seemed to inspire. It was a gratification, as I could not help feeling, that the funeral feast held over me as a journalist should have shaped itself into a kind of celebration of the better aspects of journalism.

But really, really, this is too much about myself; though the great and gracious kindness of your letter has led me on to such egotism.

Cook appears to have liked at first "the life of fairly busy leisure" which followed his retirement from

journalism. Sometimes, however, he seems to miss more regular employment. In the Diary for November 2, 1913, he writes: "A new phase in my life seems upon me. I have nothing except Committees, Victoria League, Winchester, South Kensington,<sup>1</sup> Liberal Colonial Club, to do". This was just after the publication of the *Life of Florence Nightingale*. Again, on New Year's Day 1914 we read: "I start the New Year in a sorry state—with no appointed work". Yet the Committee work in itself was no light matter. The Liberal Colonial Club, founded in 1907, had continued the Liberal League's work of "permeation" in favour of Imperialist principles in the party. It suspended its activities in 1917 owing to war preoccupations. To the Victoria League, however, Cook devoted unsparing and conscientious service to the end of his life. The League had the full benefit of a wisdom and experience which by this time had begun to attain to something of prophetic strain. Miss Gertrude Drayton, O.B.E., the secretary, informs the writer that she has looked through the minutes of the Executive Committee and cannot find a single instance during twelve years of Cook's advice on any question not being accepted. It stands almost monotonously recorded: "Mr. (or Sir Edward) Cook suggested, etc., and this was unanimously adopted". Lady Jersey has written some vivid reminiscences which, in view of Cook's almost paternal interest in the League and the light they throw upon certain features of his character, must be given in full:

Among the many friends and admirers of Sir Edward Cook few outside his immediate family can have had better oppor-

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Cook was appointed by the Board of Education Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Council of the Victoria and Albert Museum in December 1912, and served on the Council until his death. The Council placed on record in its minutes a high appreciation of Sir Edward's services. He also acted as chairman of one or two important sub-committees.

tunity of knowing the real man than his colleagues on the Executive of the Victoria League. Quiet and reserved as he may have appeared to ordinary acquaintance in the work of the League we realized the artist who understood the minds of Ruskin and Florence Nightingale and with the insight of genius grasped the imperial ideal, and therewith knew, and taught by example that "genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains".

The Victoria League is now sufficiently well known to need no further description than that it exists to "promote closer union between British subjects living in different parts of the world". On its initiation in 1901 Rudyard Kipling called it "the first attempt to organize sympathy". Sir Edward Cook's favourite description of the League was "The Maid-of-all-work of the British Empire", and it was thus that he generally introduced strangers to its work. He joined as Member of the Executive in 1907 and was a chief moving spirit until his death. In 1910 he became Chairman of the Organization Committee, an office which he held until he was summoned to the Press Bureau early in the War. In 1917 he was asked to become Deputy President, and though pleased and touched, his characteristic modesty was hard to overcome, as he declared that the League should have some one better than himself. However, the unanimous wish of the Executive overbore his objections, and he served for two years, when he resigned on giving up his London home, as he asserted that a Deputy President living in Berkshire could not fulfil conscientiously his duties at the Central Office. No post with him was a sinecure. In all matters his advice was ever available, and was quite sure to be received by return of post if he did not, as was frequently the case, arrive at the Office an hour or two after receiving a letter, to answer it in the fullest and most personal way. Even after he went to the Press Bureau he maintained this custom, and frequently called at the League's headquarters on his way to a long day's work, lasting from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M. 13 days out of 14.

It would be difficult to say too much of what the League owes to his fertile imagination and considered suggestion. This was especially notable at the beginning of the War, when the League sought the best means of serving the Country. The War Pamphlet Sub-Committee was Sir Edward's child. At its first

meeting one of the members, Mr. J. H. L. Ridley, suggested a series of pamphlets on the Causes and Issues of the War, and said that one stating Great Britain's case was urgently required. Sir Edward, in the Chair, with his slow quiet smile, drew a roll of manuscript from his pocket and laid it on the table, saying : " Here it is—I thought possibly the League might like to have it. I am prepared to make the necessary arrangements with Macmillan, but, if the Committee will accept it, this manuscript shall belong to the League ". This pamphlet, " Why Britain is at War ", was translated into Swedish, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Norwegian, Bulgarian and Chinese, nearly a million copies being distributed during the first months of the War. Sir Edward also contributed to the War Pamphlets series " Britain and the Small Nations ", " How Britain strove for Peace ", and " Britain and Turkey "; and he was joint-editor and part author of " Britain's Part in the War ".

The suggestion that the League should follow up its pamphlets by organizing meetings on the Causes and Issues also came from Sir Edward. Four hundred such meetings were addressed by speakers provided by the League, which led the van in the matter both of speakers and pamphlets, being several weeks ahead of other organizations official and unofficial. In like manner the assistance given by the League to the Government with regard to propaganda was initiated and arranged in every particular by Sir Edward Cook. Nor will the League readily forget his generous help in writing the Annual and Special Reports, leaflets and appeals, for which his talent and grasp of every subject involved were in constant requisition.

As a speaker Sir Edward was perhaps less well known than in other capacities, and his speech when he took the Chair at the final meeting of the Victoria League Health Conference in 1914 and summed up the results was almost a revelation to some of his colleagues. It had an extraordinary effect, and was the one subsequent topic of conversation among the delegates. They clamoured for it to be reprinted as a leaflet, and one hard-headed Australian declared that it was worth coming across the world to have heard it. He was always ready to sacrifice his own comforts and convenience at the shortest notice. In June 1919 the Duke of Connaught had consented to take the Chair at the Annual

Meeting at the Guildhall, but was, at the last moment, prevented by illness. Sir Edward received at breakfast a telegram asking him to take H.R.H.'s place as Chairman, caught the train half an hour later, and made a brief but excellent speech. In response to an expression of warm thanks, he simply said that his "allegiance to the Victoria League admitted of nothing else".

Perhaps, however, the memories which will linger longest in the minds of his fellow-workers will be those of Sir Edward as Chairman of the Organization Committee and as Member of the Central Executive. It was he who insisted that the balance-sheets, or statements of estimates, must be circulated to members of the Organization Committee more than 24 hours before the meeting at which they were to be discussed, and the pertinent questions which he asked when present showed how completely he had considered and understood the figures circulated, and how determined he was that there should be nothing foggy about the discussions or decisions concerning them. At the Executive Meetings his attitude was characteristic. The Executive Committee of the Victoria League, though a most harmonious body, has never been composed of dummies, but of men and women of decided opinions and keen interest in the work. When after some lively discussion on a point raised, the Chairman would ultimately say, "What does Sir Edward Cook think?" Sir Edward, who had meantime sat silent and attentive, would give a little shake of his head, and in one or two quiet sentences crystallize the whole matter and give a verdict with which all would agree. Why did his views carry such weight? The Preacher said long ago: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding". For wisdom to have practical effect surely it must be based on *understanding*. We all felt that Sir Edward had understanding, and therefore we accepted what we knew to be his wisdom.

It is remarkable that the last big task of this famous journalist and editor who had done so much to assert the freedom and independence of the Press was actually to impose fetters upon it through a bureau of censorship. The management of the Press Bureau was entrusted to

Sir Edward Cook and Sir Frank Swettenham, G.C.M.G., C.H., in June 1915. Both these gentlemen had already done valuable and voluntary work under the preceding Directorship of Sir Stanley Buckmaster, who had succeeded Mr. F. E. Smith, both these Directors becoming in turn Lord Chancellor. It may be mentioned here that Sir Edward Cook had been of great service in helping to draft some of the early diplomatic correspondence with the German Government after the outbreak of war. The work of censorship was scarcely on so high and constructive a plane as that of the editor of a great journal. But it was very necessary war-work and required in the doer the qualities of patience, judgment, tact and forbearance in a high degree. These qualities were conspicuous in Cook. He, moreover, if anybody, would be likely to reconcile the higher national interest at a great crisis with an insatiable thirst for news on the part of the newspapers. He would give full weight and a wise consideration to the former while making all possible allowance for the latter.

Sir Frank Swettenham was one of England's most experienced and successful colonial governors. He and Sir Edward Cook formed an ideal partnership for the work in hand. Sir Frank has kindly given the writer a few notes on this four years' co-operation. He would never have thought it possible to find a man with whom he could work so long almost without any difference of opinion. He was impressed, like all who were ever colleagues of Edward Cook, with two outstanding characteristics. The first was Cook's extraordinary wisdom in all difficulties. He may have been perhaps a little too concessive, but in his mind he always knew what was the right course. It was a positive pleasure on this account to work with him. The second impression was of Cook's enormous industry. He was always



willing to do not only his own daily task but that of anybody else. Cook, like Sir Frank Swettenham, did his earlier work on the Press Bureau without payment. Both gentlemen, indeed, wished to continue unpaid, but one of the conditions of their joint appointment in June 1915 was that they should receive a salary. They objected, but were necessarily overruled. The Bureau was, however, conducted throughout with the utmost economy.

Wisdom and industry Cook brought to the job in plenty. But the Press needed a good supply of another quality, patience, once defined, according to Erasmus Holiday, as "*difficilium rerum diurna perpessio*", the daily endurance of things hard to be borne.<sup>1</sup> It may be imagined what endless irritation was produced by the conflict of the two interests involved and what firmness and patience were required in the daily conduct of the Bureau. In an entry in the Diary during the early days of the censorship Cook gives a few instances of the sort of news some papers desired to print. One great newspaper clamoured for details of the numbers of the new armies, which would have been valuable information for the enemy. A provincial paper reported a great petrol depot at Harwich, a useful target for the next Zeppelin raid. A smaller provincial journal gave details of a great aerodrome in course of erection in its neighbourhood.

To keep a tight hand on this sort of thing is among the more obvious details of a censor's duty. Problems in which policy and impolicy were nicely balanced had to be decided upon, and, needless to say, the Press Bureau became the object of criticism which was the more violent as it was usually ignorant of the interests and considerations which determined the official action. For the first time we find Cook worrying and spending sleep-

<sup>1</sup> The dominie slightly misquotes his Marcus Tullius.

less nights over mistakes he thought he had committed. Again and again in these nerve-fits he wonders whether he ought not now to resign. All this is rather unlike the E.T.C. of earlier days and suggests a gradual failure in health and strength. It generally turned out that he had either imagined these or greatly exaggerated their importance. Sir Frank Swettenham cannot remember a single instance of any blunder or lapse of judgment on Cook's part during the whole course of this prolonged and complicated work. Only on two occasions can he remember that Cook lost his temper. And even then, he adds, no outward sign of the disaster was manifest. Whether a temper thus lost was not really kept the reader must decide for himself. Apparently on one of these occasions Cook made some slight mistake, for which he afterwards made a very generous apology.

The amount of daily work to be accomplished at the Bureau, whose home was at the Royal United Service Institution in Whitehall, must have satisfied even Cook's appetite. For April 30, 1917, he gives us a sample of "an average quiet day". "It may be interesting some day", he adds, "to see what one had to do":

I suppose I dictated some dozen letters in answer to questions and complaints, these latter being as usual of unfairness to some papers by non-submission (of material) by others. Also read some six articles sent down by military room. Referred to War Office some doubtful official photos. Consulted —, according to War Cabinet instructions, on certain messages to Russia which he agreed with me in thinking harmless. Suggested to War Office to consult American attaché on question of censoring military cables from the United States. Talked to — over telephone on messages from Greece. Settled some dozen other cables sent down from cable room. Asked to circulate some articles by —; not thinking them worth, got out of it. Left office at 8; dined at lodgings.

Amid these labours Cook must have been encouraged by a further honour—that of K.B.E., conferred upon him in the autumn of 1917. An invitation in 1918 to permit himself to be nominated to the Wardenship of Winchester College he declined on the ground that he could not give the office the time and attention it would and should demand. Yet in these anxious and laborious times, *in ipso discrimine rerum*, we find him working at the essays for his volume of *Literary Recreations* (published 1918) and *More Literary Recreations* (1919). He amuses himself in the evenings turning into English verses from the Greek Anthology, on which he writes a charming paper, and these, proving refractory, would sometimes pursue him to bed. In his *Recreations* Cook garnered the fruits of a lifetime's wide and varied reading. In their easy and lucid style, their wise comment on men and things, their scholarly, humorous and allusive qualities, they are truly characteristic of their author. They more than fulfil the modest aspiration of the preface to the first volume that "they may be found of interest to students of the art of literature", and no one who has followed Cook's record in this memoir will find in them a "sign of undue detachment from the stress of great events".

Cook's Diary for these years should some time, as he seems to have thought, throw a vivid light on these strenuous and often dark and disastrous war-days. Cook annotates carefully such events as the formation of the Coalition Government, the resignation of Mr. Asquith, the establishment of the "single command".

Cook's wisdom and foresight even amid the stress of an unparalleled crisis are curiously evident in a paragraph of a letter he wrote in 1915 to Mrs. Carruthers. "I still hope", he writes, "that it may be possible to

get through without conscription—which, however, is clearly the democratic thing. Its introduction in the middle of the war would be difficult. If it has to come, the State should be completely socialized *ad hoc*: every man enrolled, and told off to some service whether military, operative, civil or agricultural”. *O si sic omnes!* Would that our responsible statesmen had adopted this policy. The seriousness of the crisis would have been better brought home to the nation; heart-burnings and social and industrial disputes without end would have been avoided; discipline would have been maintained, perhaps even in Ireland to which these measures ought certainly to have been extended; stupendous sums of money would have been saved and reconstruction after the war made vastly easier. Reading this simple passage in Cook’s letter and recalling what really happened one wonders whether the highest wisdom of the nation is ever available for the nation’s needs.

Of the actual working of the Press Bureau Cook’s volume on *The Press in War-time* affords a permanent record. It is a highly original handbook on the principles and practice of censorship which should be of the utmost service in case of another great war. Cook had written to Sir Frank Swettenham on August 23, 1919, soon after the closing down of the Press Bureau :

MY DEAR SIR FRANK—I have been occupying myself of late by writing, or rather typing (for my hand is no better) an Essay on *The Press in War-time*, with some account of the Press Bureau.

The Essay would make a short book, but before going any further I should greatly like to know what you think of the idea. Is it right to publish anything at all? You will probably say that depends on what it is. Would you feel it an intolerable bore if I were to send you the MS. to look at? I should lock it up if

you were decidedly of opinion that it ought not to be published.—  
Yours very sincerely,

E. T. C.

On August 27 Cook wrote again to his former co-Director :

I take you frankly at your kind word and am sending the manuscript in a separate packet herewith. I do not know that it is interesting, but I think that it is discreet. You will tell me if it is not and whether you think I ought to ask the Home Secretary, who, however, might naturally say to a censor, "Pray censor yourself". Of course it would have been more fun to say all that one thought, but I have refrained from gibes at other departments, and as for the Press, to which you may think I have been too lenient, you must remember my antecedents.

Sir Frank Swettenham returned the manuscript with expressions of strong approval. "I think the book is admirable as a record of the office and quite unobjectionable as regards discretion". He was fully in favour of its publication. The book certainly gave the enemy information that he might have found useful, but the war was over, the next war was, it might be hoped, far distant, and meantime it was necessary that the British public and the Services should know on what principles the censorship had been conducted.

Sir Edward Cook died before the little work was published, and the proofs were revised by Sir Frank Swettenham. It appeared in February 1920, with an appendix containing an appropriate and admirable character-sketch of the author by Mr. J. A. Spender. None of Cook's productions illustrate more remarkably his power of subduing a difficult and complicated subject to logical division and orderly arrangement. Here, as always, his intellect moved upon the face of the waters and worked out the primeval Fiat. Or, in a humbler similitude, he is like the pioneer who surveys

a tract of waste land, clears it of stubs and undergrowth, lets in the daylight, builds roads and paths and hedges and evolves a civil, habitable and fruitful estate. Every attentive reader will be impressed with the logical clarity of the little work, with the way in which a technical treatise, full of facts and quotations always carefully verified, becomes through the alchemy of literary talent an attractive and interesting book. Cook was constitutionally incapable of dulness or pedantry, and *The Press in War-time*, which he never saw in its published form, suggests the sad reflection that he died in the full fruit-time of his intellectual powers. Indeed in his last days he had begun work on a Life of Queen Victoria and a treatise on Public Opinion on the lines of Professor Dicey's well-known book.

Among the recognitions of Cook's work on the Press Bureau came one from Lord Buckmaster, who wrote (May 4, 1919) :

The closing of the Press Bureau ended a strange episode in our public life. It was always to me a matter of great satisfaction that I was able to secure your help. Without it the difficulties would have been greatly intensified and the success much lessened. In spite of all the misrepresentations and abuse to which we were subjected and in spite of some of the mischievous things we were compelled to do, I am certain that the office did accomplish a great work, and I always look back to my association with it and with you and our proved friends with very pleasurable memories.

Mr. Francis Meade, Secretary of the Bureau, wrote on receiving a copy of *The Press in War-time* : " We all loved Sir Edward at the Press Bureau. Everybody who was brought into contact with him felt at once his ready sympathy and kindness ; and myself more than any one, as I fear I must have tried his patience many a time " .

There can be no doubt that the work and worry of the censorship was one cause of Sir Edward Cook's premature death. He may fairly be numbered among those who sacrificed themselves for their country in the Great War. And he would have asked for no better destiny than to die almost in harness and after the accomplishment of a great and important work of public service.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE AGE OF PUFF

Nobody is either the better or the worse for being praised.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

COOK never acted or spoke or, I believe, even thought in malice. I cannot imagine him intriguing against or supplanting a colleague, or doing anything mean or underhand. Moreover, his experience as an editor seems never to have soured him or made him misanthropic or cynical. Perhaps no one has fuller opportunities of observing the foibles and frailties of humanity and even "*les petites choses des grands hommes*" than the editor of a great paper. Cook regarded humanity from a very detached and objective point of view. He was a Stoic in this also, that he formed no great expectations of human nature and was therefore seldom surprised or disappointed. "That such men should act thus", wrote the Imperial philosopher, "is a necessity of nature: to wish it otherwise is to wish that the fig tree had no juice".

It was therefore not in malice or despite but simply to exemplify a sign of the times that Cook filled three boxes with letters and newspaper cuttings under the title of "The Age of Puff". No despot in the world ever had such power of inflicting pain or giving pleasure as the newspaper editor. He dispenses from his sanctum



a commodity which to many people seems to be more precious than gold, yea, than fine gold, namely, notoriety. This newspaper-made and ephemeral distinction has been described as the "bastard-brother" of true fame, to which, indeed, it is related as the gent. to the gentleman. In old pre-newspaper days when a man became conspicuous from the crowd he usually acquired real fame, the reward of high merit or conspicuous achievement of some sort, if it were only in the commission of enormous crime. Fame, like Nemesis, often came *pede claudo* and sometimes never reached the man in his own lifetime. There was little conscious pursuit of it. Neither Sir Henry Morgan nor Dick Turpin could hope for headlines or portraiture in the illustrated page. Shakespeare himself, as some minor poets must recall with incredulous surprise, took no thought for his own posthumous fame, or even for the preservation of his plays. A renown that grew in this way, "under weights", was likely to be deep-rooted and permanent. In these circumstances the men of distinction were a real aristocracy of merit and achievement, and the rest of the people were known mainly to their neighbours.

But democracy, it has been said, is "hostile to all monopolies, even the monopoly of greatness". If the many cannot have true fame, they can have an important and flattering ingredient therefor, the *digito monstrari*, the pleasure of having their names often under the public eye. They could be notorious, if not famous, conspicuous, if not great, and the daily newspaper was the means by which the privileges of a select aristocracy were distributed among the people in wider commonalty. The newspaper cannot confer nor can it permanently obstruct a genuine and well-earned renown. But it can confer or withhold the retail commodity of an immediate though ephemeral distinction, the patronage

of which is largely in the hands of the responsible editors of the daily Press. Hence these well-filled boxes filled with the petitions and complaints and agonies of littérateurs and artists and politicians who pant for what the editor can give or deny as hart never panted after the water-brooks.

Among these papers we may easily distinguish the various species of "puff" indicated by Mr. Puff himself. The "puff direct" is the most usual, and with rather surprising frequency is written and sent by the aspirant himself. This, in spite of the shallow egotism, the self-delusion and the complete lack of humour generally implied, is the least objectionable of all the brands, because it is at least honest. No one need be very indignant with the gentleman who writes to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, enclosing the first of a series of articles whose publication, he thinks, "will mark an epoch in the history of mankind and revolutionize the whole realm of religious thought and cannot fail to vibrate instantly throughout the world". These earth-shaking utterances are to be published "exactly as they are because the author has weighed every word". Specific instructions are given as to the manner and date of their publication, the possibility of an editorial rejection having, it seems, never been entertained. Yet this appears to have been their fate and I cannot discover that the revelation of ultimate truth was ever given to the world. In any case, the bomb seems to have been what in military slang is known as a "dud".

The self-written testimonials in this selection are innumerable. They are often accompanied with flattering references to the editor and his paper, which are obviously intended as part of the consideration for the expected favours. It is surprising how suddenly the politeness and benignity of a hopeful anticipator may

pass into the abusiveness of a disappointed applicant. One long-winded correspondent imposes upon himself the task of instructing Mr. Cook as new editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the deeper principles of art and beauty. "The 'P.M.G.'", he writes, "already leads the van in social progress, and without fear or favour continually strikes off the trammels with which political dilettanteism would hinder real progress. It is therefore inevitable that when your journal sees the light it must go towards it". Then comes a long disquisition on the "Gospel of Art", amid which we read that "if Homer came to-day and sung to England, the people would not be touched by his song, for they do not understand Greek", which seems as pardonable as Tilburina's inability to see the Spanish fleet, "because it was not yet in sight". From these uplands of vague but ideal speculation we drop rather suddenly to the practical envoi: "Therefore I want meanwhile the job to write your notices of these contributions".

This gentleman was impressed with the absolute and imperative necessity of a meeting between himself and Mr. Cook, "whether it might result in Mr. Cook taking up and publishing certain views being of secondary importance". The main object of a begging letter of this description nearly always appears *in parenthesis*. Cook's reply to this gentleman was courteous but conclusive: "I regret that I am unable to make an appointment as you suggest. But I can add in all sincerity that you altogether overrate the importance attaching to a conversation with me".

These "direct puffs", as one might expect, are not remarkable for restraint or understatement. A lady who had given a charity recital which realised fifty pounds "by her own unaided exertions," and who was not minded to reserve her whole reward for the next

world, sent the editor of the *Pall Mall* her own critique. "Her selections were judiciously made and splendidly uttered. Every emotion and every alternation of emotion came out with exquisite distinctness in the tones and looks of the speaker. Her voice, clear and sweet, possesses great compass and is expertly modulated", and so on through unqualified superlatives which would have left this great journal with nothing to say if a greater luminary should appear on a public platform.

Very amusing, too, in its affectation of critical impartiality is the letter of a clergyman forwarding a series of sermons he has published. Of these, he writes for the guidance of the reviewer, "No. 10 seems to me the most scholarly", and "No. 16 strikes me as the most eloquent". Another gentleman, who, strange to say, is an old University man, forwards a puff of a "shocker" he has just produced. The autobiographical part tells the world, or would have told the world, that his career at Harrow was "one of exceptional brilliance, during which it literally rained prizes". He also draws out a list of his distinguished contemporaries at Oxford, though it is hard to see how he can claim any credit for this. The singular thing is that these auto-panegyrics are not confined to the obscure and struggling aspirant. Men and women of established success, including two prolific novelists, roll their own logs with an energy which would seem to argue a want of faith in the permanence of their reputations and the staying quality of their own works. "Nothing", wrote the philosopher already quoted, "is either the better or the worse for being praised. This applies also to things called beautiful in common life; and indeed, what is intrinsically beautiful needs no addition, any more than Law, any more than Truth, any more than Benevolence or Reverence. Which of these owes its beauty to men's praise,

or is the worse for their censure ? Does an emerald suffer if men do not praise it ? Or gold, or ivory or purple ? A lyre, a dagger, a floweret or a shrub ? ” These are hard sayings for an age in which the commercial spirit has invaded art, literature, the stage, journalism and other departments of our national life, when every production must have its immediate advertisement so as to produce the maximum of immediate cash profit.

It is rather melancholy work looking through Cook’s “puff-boxes”. They suggest a rough football scrimmage in which, to one’s surprise, some owners of well-known names are seen to be shoving and struggling among much smaller fry. For the smaller fry, indeed, every humane editor will feel some sympathy. “ You have not reviewed my novel ; but if you knew what sufferings I endure from chronic dyspepsia, and how hard it is to support a widowed mother, you would, I am sure, relent ”—such a letter probably covers a real tragedy, and editor and reviewer will be tempted to stretch many points on his behalf. “ It is impossible ”, writes Cook in reference to these applications of budding authors, “ for an editor not to feel some weak, natural sympathy as he thinks how many innocent hopes, how much bitter disappointment lie behind such ingenuous missives ”. This pardonable weakness is not universal among editors and reviewers, for the gentleman with the chronic dyspepsia includes among the unkind notices which he copies and sends : “ Mr. ——— might write a book better worth reading than ——— if he, Mr. ———, would make his characters less idiotic and their adventures more amusing ”.

But there is a sort of puff under the category of “ direct ” for which Cook himself can have had little tolerance. One very nasty sort is the puff paragraph sent not by the author or performer himself but by a

third person whom he has obviously suborned. Cook has kept and annotated a few of these. Here is a letter from an anonymous correspondent, who says he encloses his card but does not, which rather artfully commends a certain writer of minor verse, himself a great "practitioner of panegyric" in his own behalf, for the vacant office of Poet-laureateship. One wonders if principal and agent really believed that Mr. Cook would be taken in by these disingenuous manœuvres. Then the inducements sometimes held out by the author or artist were not always very tactful. Here is a gentleman who writes that he is interested in a certain book which for some months has remained unreviewed. If the editor will make good this omission, he will receive a postal order for one pound as "an honorarium for your trouble". The notepaper reveals that this gentleman, appropriately enough, was an "auctioneer and valuer", and Mr. Cook has kept the letter and pencilled those professional titles again beneath his signature with an obvious significance. Another person, in forwarding a company prospectus, requests the editor to describe the investment as "gilt-edged," in return for which he will be able to secure a few of the preference shares for which there is such a demand. These frank and vulgar financial appeals are, however, not common. But another amusing example is rather on the border line of bribery. It is a letter from a dentist, calling attention to a book which was being sent in and of which a review was requested. "We shall be most happy to reciprocate by giving our best attention gratis to any member of your staff requiring our aid at any time". If the artist had promised to draw the fangs of one's rivals, remarked Mr. Cook, the offer would have been more attractive.

As already mentioned, the bait often takes the form

of a compliment to the editor. An eminent novelist, who has contributed more than anybody else except perhaps another eminent novelist to the contents of these boxes, writes : " The importance of the *Pall Mall Gazette* as a literary organ is so great, and its influence on other journals so strong and immediate, that I am more than ever anxious that your reviewer should have all the time it is possible to give him—with kindest regards ". Another letter from this gentleman enshrines a piece of self-glorification of which he himself professes to be " a little ashamed ". A postscript (a good many of his puffs are in postscripts) adds : " I have never thanked you for the promptitude and prominence of your review of my novel. The reviewer is evidently an able man, and he certainly scores some points against me, but, frankly, I think he was not quite the right man to put himself into a position of sympathy with a book like the — ". It is astonishing how human types persist. Here we are, *mutatis mutandis*, back to Sir Fretful Plagiary, who was certainly never more raw-nerved to newspaper criticism than this latter-day writer of fiction. These letters, which all went promptly into the " Age of Puff " boxes, would, if published, make an interesting psychological study.

One gentleman, who, strangely enough, appears to be himself an assistant-editor, thinks the puff-paragraph itself, being " quite gratuitously contributed ", should be an inducement in itself, though he does hold out a prospect of a subsequent advertisement and a copy of the book. The paragraph itself is so grossly self-appreciative that the " very many thanks in anticipation " were probably wasted.

Mr. Puff's " collateral " species finds many modern exemplars in this museum. The type as illustrated in the comedy is worth setting out :

Yesterday, as the celebrated George Bonmot was sauntering down St. James's Street, he met the lively Lady Mary Myrtle coming out of the park. "Good God, Lady Mary, I'm surprised to meet you in a white jacket—for I expected never to have seen you but in a full-trimmed uniform and a light horseman's cap!" "Heavens, George, where could you have learned that?" "Why", replied the wit, "I just saw a print of you, in a new publication called the *Camp Magazine*; which, by-the-by, is a devilish clever thing, and is sold at No. 3, on the right hand of the way, two doors from the printing office, the corner of Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, price only one shilling".

The object, I need hardly say, of this indirect variety is to delude the reader into believing that the advertisement of the *Camp Magazine* was not the original motive but only an accidental idea.

Plenty of examples in this kind may be found in Cook's anthology. There is one gentleman, a writer on musical subjects, who seems to have had a wonderful series of bicycle and other accidents, each of which furnishes a peg for a lengthy description and a collateral puff about the popularity of his works and lectures. As an exhibition of unabashed egotism it would be hard to beat this gentleman's collected efforts. If he treated other editors as he treated Mr. Cook his days must largely have been consumed in this assiduous tending and watering of his own little garden-plot. Publishers' advertisements, which Cook particularly disliked, often furnish examples in this kind. He gives a typical example which, it will be seen, is quite "collateral" in character: "Miss Laura Montmorency, who was presented at Court yesterday, is, we understand, a second cousin of Mr. Smith-Jones, whose important novel of modern life, etc.". The débutante simply serves the purpose of a peg on which to hang the Smith-Jones advertisement. Then there is the lady novelist, also an indefatigable blower of her own trumpet, who writes a



long article in the public Press (likewise preserved by Mr. Cook) in which she has the hardihood to grow sarcastic about log-rolling and puffing, but manages two fine "collaterals" about herself and a royal favour, and about another writer with whom she labours incessantly in a sort of puff-partnership.

And this brings us to speak of the "puff-collusive", though with a change in the meaning of the term. Of course, modern advertising is not innocent of the collusive puff in the sense in which it is used in the comedy. We have all heard of books and plays benefiting by dark hints as to the risky and audacious character of their contents. But this species is better reserved for those reciprocal partnerships just mentioned. Cook's collection is rich in these exercises. He himself exposed in the *Pall Mall* quite a number under the title of "Studies in Reciprocity". The partnership to which I have referred between a novelist and a poet seems to have subsisted for a long time. Such mutual services really constitute a mild fraud upon the public, who are not behind the scenes and are therefore unconscious of the incessant bamboozle. But they are sometimes detected, as will be seen from the following letter which Cook has preserved: "On returning to town after a week's absence I have just fallen in with the enclosed (a newspaper cutting), and hope some independent journalist will one day expose the 'claw me and I'll claw you' proceedings carried on by ——. She never omits referring to him as the poet of the period: while he never fails to laud her in return".

A lust for genuine fame may be "the last infirmity of noble mind", but we can scarcely give the benefit of that generous extenuation to this vulgar and egotistical passion for newspaper notoriety. Yet we must not exaggerate its prevalence. The great body of the people

are unaffected by the virus. Cook's correspondence reveals instances of persons who shrink from mention in the public press as earnestly as others court it. The choice spirits in his distinguished circle of friendship make no contribution to these treasures.

We have been dealing hitherto mainly with the personal paragraph and the review or critique. But, as everybody knows, a newspaper is not self-contained, and every number includes a certain amount of material contributed by the outer world. Such contributions are invited, but the editor, except in the case of a definite order, reserves to himself the right of acceptance or rejection. Hence another whole set of pains and pleasures which he is empowered to distribute. Many persons have had their share of these—the delight of acceptance and appearance, the hope of publication long delayed, the shock of rejection with the editor's regrets which are much less poignant than those of the disappointed writer. One wonders how much wasted and frustrated effort is represented by the few selected articles which appear in each day's issue. Surely nobody ever condemned himself to a more precarious and wearing profession than that of the free-lance writer. A man's handiwork, embodying the finest essence of his wit and wisdom, and incidentally his chances of bread and cheese, is subject to the decisions of a tribunal from which there is no appeal. "The wrath of dissentient politicians", writes Cook in an article of reminiscence, "is great, but it is nothing to that of rejected contributors, and these do not conceal their names". He proceeds to quote a rather extreme example, delivered with the writer's full name and address: "Sir—You are ignorant and narrow-minded. I am as certain of it as that I hold a pen in my hand at this moment. Outside of what is elementary and picked up in journal-

istic gutters you know nothing and can teach nothing. You move in a circle of knowledge no bigger than a sixpence, and your intellect is as shallow as that small coin. Heaven help some of us when we submit our work to the judgment of such as you. The day will come——". "Yes", writes Cook, "it has come. My injured friend shall complain no longer that I have never published one of his contributions".

Few tasks can be more invidious than this daily editorial duty of selection among a large delivery of original articles by industrious and earnestly expectant writers. It is not surprising that an editor should receive almost as many letters of violent and impotent abuse as a Prime Minister. Even when he has accepted a contribution, he still has a discretion as to the day of appearance, and here again is a source of vexation for the *genus irritabile*. A philosophic attitude is not so easy for a man or woman whose daily bread depends on publication, which, in the custom of the trade, always precedes payment.

The passion for the pseudo-fame dispensed by the newspapers may perhaps subside with its growing vulgarization and the increasing share in it enjoyed by the herces and heroines of the divorce and criminal courts. The system of "puff", which in Cook's editorial days had already extended in an amazing degree from the theatrical, political and social spheres to the literary and seems to be still developing, does unquestionably much harm. It debases the currency of criticism, destroys confidence, builds up fictitious reputations and favours the pushful and pretentious at the expense of the modest and meritorious. We may trust, however, that in the long run merit, even when handicapped, as it usually is, by modesty, will prevail. "Fame", said Bacon, "is like a river that beareth up things light and swollen, and

drowns things weighty and solid". But the forces which have hitherto preserved for the world, against all adverse influences, the best that has been said and thought are still operative and will continue to discriminate between what is of permanent worth and what is only the object of temporary fashion and favour.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SOME STORIES

Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem. ("Mix a little frivolity with your wise counsels.")—HOR. *Od.* iv. 12. 27.

Cook's Diary contains the gleanings of a good thirty years of social and convivial experience, in the course of which he met most of the distinguished figures in politics, literature and art. Happily Cook enjoyed a good story and he has enlivened his record with an unfailing succession of humorous anecdotes. These are not strictly relevant to our subject, if we are to observe Cook's rigid canons of biographical art; but they are duly recorded in the Diary and must therefore have been intended, though perhaps subconsciously, for eventual publication. The reader will not object to the garnering of a selection of these in a separate chapter, as they occasionally throw light upon contemporary persons and events and as otherwise there might be no opportunity of preserving them.

Some of the best of these anecdotes refer to the great Conservative statesman, the third Marquis of Salisbury. The neighbourhood of Hatfield still retains a strong impression of Lord Salisbury's absent-minded and Cecilian aloofness, especially in his later days. His growing inability to remember names and faces resulted in many amusing incidents. One of the best was told

by a gentleman who had it from the Bishop of St. Albans. It occurred after Buller's recall from South Africa. Lord Salisbury and the Bishop of London were at Sandringham with the King. His Majesty said to the Bishop, "Lord Salisbury has just asked me, 'Who is that young-looking clergyman? I seem to know his face, but cannot put a name to him.' But", continued the King, "don't you mind. Lord Salisbury took up a photo of me just now and said, 'Ah, old Buller, I see'".

*A propos* of the same infirmity is a story told by a well-known statesman and confirmed by others who were at Hatfield on this occasion. A certain baronet whom no one could suspect of military leanings was invited to the great house from Saturday to Monday. Lord Salisbury covered him with attentions, probably to the gratified surprise and even the political conversion of the newly decorated guest.<sup>1</sup> At last Lord Salisbury tapped him on the shoulder and took him aside for a little private talk. "Now tell me", said his lordship, "is it true that Kitchener is making such a muddle of it as all the other generals?" The story records not the reply of this suddenly constituted military expert, but it does go on to explain. "Next day Lady Gwendolen Cecil said to a friend, 'Papa is getting so bad about remembering faces. From Saturday to Monday he mistook Sir —— for Lord Roberts'".

Another story of the same kind was told by Mr. Leo Maxse. Lord Salisbury was going down to Wiltshire. Mr. Maxse warned Mr. Dickson-Poynder (afterwards the member for the Chippenham Division) not to mind if the Prime Minister took no notice of him. After the visit Dickson-Poynder said to Maxse, "You

<sup>1</sup> I believe this gentleman was recommended for a baronetcy by mistake for another gentleman of the same name. Errors of this kind are not easily rectified.

are an ass ! Lord Salisbury was as nice as possible and talked to me about the war in the freest possible manner". A few days later Lord Salisbury remarked, " I didn't know Brodrick had anything to do with Wiltshire ".

A faint aroma of faded antagonisms is conveyed by Lord Salisbury's reply to some one who asked him whether he missed Lord Randolph Churchill—" Do you miss a carbuncle which has been removed from your neck ? "

As is well known, the Cecils are not a horse-racing family. The political caricatures of our period never portray a Cecil, as they portray a Cavendish or a Primrose, on the Epsom Downs. In the accounts Cook gives of his innumerable visits to Mentmore or the Durdans we have glimpses into that absorbing game, whose honours the master of these houses treasured as highly as the highest won in the other sport of politics. Cook seems to have been rather fascinated by the evidences of this *grande passion* of his aristocratic friend, which was not readily reconcilable with the Nonconformist conscience and the position of a Liberal Prime Minister. Lord Rosebery never felt impelled to abandon horse-racing out of respect for the Nonconformist element which formed the backbone of his party. Yet he was well aware that the two departments of sport and politics could not be kept entirely unrelated, and that a beautiful favourite, whilst winning him glorious laurels on the race-course, might be effectually discrowning him in another arena. Lord Salisbury on the other hand, though having no such puritanic susceptibilities to placate within his own party, went as little to race-meetings as any Primitive Methodist. He had some contempt for the sport if we may judge from a certain story related in Cook's diaries. His lordship once wrote to Mr. Balfour postponing a meeting of the Committee

of National Defence, as "Devonshire was going to Newmarket to see which of two quadrupeds can run quickest". Perhaps any game might be reduced to an absurdity by being thus reduced to its elements.

Disraeli does not look personally into these daily records. He died a few years before Cook began his Diary. But we find a good many reminiscences of a statesman whose memory was still so fresh. One of these stories, told by that prince of raconteurs, Mr. George Russell, takes us back to the days of the Berlin Congress. It relates how Odo Russell had prevented Disraeli from addressing the Congress in French :

Sir Philip (afterwards Lord) Currie came to Lord Odo Russell<sup>1</sup> and said, "The Chief has prepared a French speech for to-morrow and we shall be the laughing-stock of Europe. Can't you stop him?" "It's a delicate negotiation but I will try". He went to Disraeli's room: "My dear lord, I hear you propose to speak in French to-morrow". "Such is my intention". "But this will be a terrible disappointment. Your French is perfect, but everybody can talk French. What the ambassadors are expecting is a speech in English from the greatest living master of the language. Are you going to disappoint them?" Disraeli spoke in English. Query: Was he taken in by the flattery or did he see through it?

Another anecdote carries us back to early Victorian days. The artist Landseer was dining with the Queen and the Prince Consort. He told a story of a dog which he sent back to fetch a five-pound note he had lost on the road. "And did the dog bring the note?" asked the Queen. "No, Ma'am, he brought five sovereigns". The Queen is reported to have laughed "consumedly". But the sequel is more amusing than the joke. At night

<sup>1</sup> British Ambassador in Berlin.



an equerry came to Landseer to say, "The Prince begs Mr. Landseer not to tell such foolish stories. How could he suppose that the Queen would believe such nonsense?" As a study in three characters this anecdote deserves to survive.

Many stories are told of his late Majesty, King Edward VII. But a joke ascribed to him when still, and apparently destined for ever to be, Prince of Wales, is surely one of the best of *bons mots* ever uttered. "We hear a great deal", said the genial Prince, "about the Eternal Father; but I am the only man afflicted with an Eternal Mother". Even Mr. Stead felt himself able to pardon much for that truly royal jest.

This recalls a story told by Lord Rosebery *à propos* of a strike being bad for the Government. Lord Aberdeen wrote a letter to Sir Robert Peel saying that the birth of a Prince of Wales would make them popular—"though I'm not aware", he added, "that we were in any way concerned in his production".

Recording a social event in a great salon Cook gives us one of his thumb-nail sketches of Lord Kitchener. These efforts at lightning portraiture sometimes conflict with one's hero-worships. "Kitchener", writes Cook, "is rather repellent to look at—a sort of squint, red face and slightly blotchy nose, but a fine figure of a man. He talks little, but is a sort of noble savage". Cook seems to have been rather disappointed in this man of iron. "I wish", he writes in 1915 to Mrs. Carruthers, "Lord Kitchener in fact was more like the Lord Kitchener of the popular legend: the strong, ruthless devotee of hard efficiency. I suppose the War Office with its strangling traditions is too strong for him".

It is obvious from these notes that relations between Lords Kitchener and Milner were not always entirely affectionate. Nor, apparently, were the Field-Marshal

and Lord Morley exactly bosom friends. Mr. Morley vetoed King Edward's strong pressure to make Kitchener Viceroy of India. Kitchener, it is said, was almost childishly vexed, though at that time Mr. Morley was right. Later, however, the appointment might well have been made. Yet just before the war when some one remarked to Lord Morley, "So Kitchener will be the next Viceroy", he replied, "Only over my dead body".

Kitchener discountenanced the idea that the *coup de grâce* for Germany could come in the East and he foretold that Italy would be the first neutral to come in. The Bantam brigade, he said, were like the Gurkhas. On another occasion Cook hears that it was Kitchener who assured Mr. Asquith before the Newcastle speech that there was no shortage of munitions.

The Field-Marshal himself contributes to the humour of the diaries. One of his gems is a story of the Boer War. "But I'm a field-cornet", pleaded a captive. "If you were the 'ole b—y band, you'd 'ave to 'ave it".

It is well for people to preserve their idols, so Cook's iconoclastic phrases must be quoted with reserve. Here, however, is his first impression of Cecil Rhodes, whom he visited in London with Mr. Hawksley in February 1896 :

His expression is not quite like his pictures, in some phases more sinister, but when smiling more simple—a curious squeaky voice, closely bitten nails and rather protrudingly fat. He was sitting alone in a very big room, over the fire—unopened telegrams, notes, cards, on the table. Talked with his feet over the fire.

About Garrett<sup>1</sup>—how a week before the Jameson Raid he had come and said, "Look here, Mr. Rhodes, I can't stand this country. You are all too fat and lethargic. There's nothing stirring". "I smiled and advised him to wait. A week later he came again and I hoped it was hot enough now".

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Garrett, editor of the *Cape Times*.

I cannot find any record of Cook having ever met Mr. Lloyd George on these various festive occasions. But if that ripening genius did not assist in the symposia, he was frequently the object of their wit and humour. Some of the stories reflect the feelings entertained in the earlier days for Mr. Lloyd George by those who were afterwards to be his colleagues in office. A nightmare said to have haunted the aspiring statesman's slumbers was probably a Tory imagining. Mr. Lloyd George is said to have dreamt he was at the door of Inferno, whither he was no doubt despatched in the daily imprecations of his enemies. There he noticed a company of poor folks and begged for their admission. But Satan said, "No; they cannot be admitted. These are they who accepted your land campaign and are, therefore, too green to burn". The Lloyd George of the early days of this century was reckoned among the arch-enemies of all who "thought imperially". It is true he informed the present writer even in the Boer War crisis that he was as good an Imperialist as any who assumed that name, but few of us anticipated the time when he would be the head of a coalition consisting of the whole body of Unionism and that right section of Liberals which carries on the tradition of Liberal Imperialism.

Of W. T. Stead, as may be expected, the stories told are innumerable. Stead went down in the *Titanic*, and some one remarks on the irony of the great journalist being involved in such a highly sensational occurrence and yet being unable to report it, at least for newspapers on this side Jordan. Stead is well pictured in an authentic story referring to his later life. He had written an article for the *Daily Chronicle* about Mr. W. O'Brien which threatened a libel action, and the editor sent his secretary to see the author about it. He

found Stead asleep on the sofa in Mowbray House and waited for him to wake. "Hullo, what do you want?" "Mr. Donald, editor, has sent me to ask you about O'Brien". "O'Brien, O'Brien, don't talk O'Brien to me. Don't you know that the ghost of Charles I. walks the streets of London every day? Go to the Eustace Miles restaurant any day at lunch and you will see him". "And did you ever reach O'B.? " asked Cook. "Yes, but after a long excursion through Mr. Stead's prison experiences, etc."

On one occasion Cook put to the test one of Stead's "spook" experiences. In January 1906 Stead told Cook he had been "spook-writing", that is, in telepathic communication with Jameson and Garrett. Jameson had nothing to say, but Garrett remarked that he had been with Rhodes at the moment when the news of the Raid came. A month later Cook asked Rhodes if there was any truth in this statement, "the only testable and definite part of Stead's report". Rhodes said, "Certainly not". But Stead's faith in his presentiments or "sign-posts", as he called them, was proof against all such discouragement.

An entry in 1900 records a dinner with South African gold magnates. Dr. Hillier reports how Mr. Barney Barnato, when Solly Joel was arrested for treason, exclaimed, "Impossible! If it was robbery I could believe it".

One or two episcopal stories linger in the memory. The Bishop of London, on starting for Egypt by sea, said that his grace before meat would be, "For what we are about to retain may the Lord make us truly thankful". A passage from a sermon by the same prelate must have amused the congregation: "I have been with a dying woman whose only fear of death was that she might meet Germans. I assured her she

would not, and I saw her when just dead and from the smile on her face I was sure she had not ”.

Of the brief and detached sallies the supply would transcend available space. The very best of the pun species relates to Lord French and his territorial title. It was reported that the Field-Marshal proposed to call himself Viscount French of Ypres, but “ribald men at the front ” suggested “of St. Omer ” or “Loos ”.

Another successful effort in “paronomasia ” was the dubbing of the Jewish regiment the “Jordan Highlanders”, whose motto was to be “No advance without security ”. Lord Rosebery must also bear all the responsibility for having expressed a hope that “Peggy’s delivery would not be so slow as Crewe’s ”.

And, speaking of titles, I recall a pretty story by Miss Violet Markham of a Yankee “who paid the Heralds’ College £400 to provide him with ancestors, and then £800 to push them up when found ”.

Mr. Asquith’s wit is always pleasant, as when he called the son of a certain well-known Peer “a chip of the old blockhead ”. At a domestic party, when Miss Elizabeth Asquith was afraid with some reason that he might be bored with the recitations and suggested he should get up a bridge party in another room : “No ”, he replied heroically, “as I said to the Pope, *nous irons jusqu’au bout* ”.

An official at the Foreign Office reported an incident which does unquestionable injustice to two great men. He had been seeing Lord Salisbury off to Contrexéville in great spirits. A Frenchman was asked if Contrexéville was lively. “No, but now that Lord Roberts and Lord Salisbury are there, the *demi-monde* will doubtless arrive ”. Lord Salisbury was very much amused at this.

The Colonial Office is the scene of another of these

selections. The Countess of Warwick had called there to make inquiries about Jameson and his party. Thinking that she was not being treated with sufficient consideration, her ladyship said, "I don't think you know who I am". "Oh, yes", replied the official, "I do; you're Letty Lind".

The War Office fairly maintains its reputation as the "clown" of the public departments. During the war a hospital in France wired to that office for a battery and received this reply: "Shells sent to-day, guns follow".

A pretty humour is attributed to the Earl of Lonsdale, who, as is well known, was a friend of the German Emperor before the war. On being asked, in 1916, what his worship thought of the Kaiser now, he is reported to have replied, "Well, it only shows how careful one ought to be in picking up acquaintances on the Continent".

A story illustrating Lord Rosebery's "gentlehood" fills one day of the Diary. At a County Council dinner ice pudding was served. A Councillor sitting next to Lord Rosebery said, "I expect your lordship doesn't know it, but this pudding is stone-cold". R.: "Thank you so much; it's most curious". He beckons to the butler who leaves the room and on his return whispers to his lordship, who, in turn, says to the County Councillor, "It seems it's some new dish the cook has invented—an ice pudding".

Another story, perhaps worth rescuing from oblivion, is that when Sir J. M'Garel Hogg, Chairman of the old Metropolitan Board of Works, was raised to the peerage he took the title of Magheramorne. The footman at a house where he used to visit said, "Sir J. M'Garel Hogg, I think". "No, Lord Magheramorne". The outlandish name was too much for him and the new

peer was announced as "The late Sir James M'Garel Hogg".

Sometimes Cook supplies a personal touch which is worth many pages of formal biography. A well-informed friend tells him that General Botha plays a capital game of bridge. The friend had asked one of Botha's officers whether the General ever played during the South African War. "Yes, when he could get a young English officer to play with". The conclusion of the story is delightful: "It was rumoured that Botha sent out commandos with that object".

The Diary reveals Cook as an ideal interviewer and reporter. A good example is furnished by his *précis* of the speeches delivered at an Alpine Club dinner in December 1902. Near him sat J. W. Cross, George Eliot's husband, photographed by Cook as "a middle-aged, red-haired man, not prepossessing".

Leslie Stephen, looking very lean and weak, made an excellent speech. If he had long been absent from these dinners, it was not from failure of sympathy. He loved the Alps as much as ever and did not renounce the faith or deplore the time he had spent on scrambles which he might have devoted to the study of federal institutions. He well remembered Freeman's wrath at his taking away that historian's most promising pupil, Bryce, to the Alps. But he didn't regret it. For one thing, as a matter of ethics, his principle was, when you have once found a solid satisfying pleasure, stick to it. And Alpine pleasures left no aftertaste, except of delightful memories and of warmest friendships.

But Alpinism no longer needed defence. At one time stern regard for veracity compelled the Alpine Club to boast. Now they could afford to be modest and charitable, and to remember of non-Alpinists what a Trinity man said of members of the smaller colleges: "Do not let us forget that they also are God's creatures".

He had to couple with his toast of visitors the Swiss *chargé d'affaires* and Traill. *A propos* of the former, he said, "The

Swiss are going in much for railway guards ; don't let them forget that they are also guards of Paradise ". Of the connection between Alps and literature, he said they had inspired the poetic outburst of this century. Wordsworth had found in the English Lakes that microcosm of the Alps—" The silence that is, etc.". Byron had found his inspiration there. Coleridge had first proclaimed Mont Blanc a monarch, and Shelley laid the scene of his greatest work on the Caucasus. Tennyson had the misfortune to be born in the fens, but there was no better instance of his wonderful power of putting a picture than his description of the view from Milan Cathedral—" How faintly flushed, etc.".

Traill made some good points in his reply (he had lately contributed an article to one of the Reviews, enumerating sixty or more minor poets). Mount Parnassus was now so well trodden and so certain to be provided before long with ropes that Alpinists would avoid it.

Among the speeches at another dinner, at the Authors' Club, Cook especially mentions that of Mr. Griffiths, the well-known American Consul-General. Among his stories was one of Howells, to whom a prolific writer said, " I don't know how it is but my later novels do not strike me as so good as my earlier ". " My dear sir, they are quite as good ; it is your taste that has improved ".

Cook records many conversations with that infinitely wise savant and statesman, Lord Haldane. An entry in the Diary runs thus :

Haldenstein was before Mr. Justice Darling, who addressed him by that name. The Associate whispered, " Since the war he has dropped his stein ". " And who has picked it up—Lord Haldane ? "

This reminds us that no man suffered more from the war-spirit in this country in its baser manifestation than Lord Haldane. That a man should have been devoted to German literature or music brought him under the



political suspicion of persons who probably knew very little of either. Lord Haldane told a party who were dining with him that he was accused of being an illegitimate brother of the Kaiser, of being married to a German, and of having a German mother. Yet, said Lord Grey of Fallodon to Cook on another occasion, "Haldane is the one of us who has least to reproach himself with. He gave us the Expeditionary Force and the Territorial system. What we must all bear the blame of is that, if we could have foreseen, we ought to have provided arms and equipment to enable us to put a million men on the Continent in the first three months. But", he added with some verisimilitude, "Parliament would never have sanctioned it". Cook reports Haldane as having said to Mr. Asquith, "It would have been better if you could have had Kitchener to manage the war and me to manage the War Office". Many thought so at the time and think so still. But, of course, the irrational persecution of the wisest head in England—it would not surprise some of Lord Haldane's friends if one day he discovered the philosopher's stone—made that ideal arrangement impossible.

Cook's neighbours at dinner frequently favoured him with personal impressions of leading people of the time. Thus Mrs. Asquith talked about Mr. Arthur Balfour (1895), and was duly reported in Cook's private daily chronicle. She said that Mr. Balfour's only real interests were science, music and metaphysics. What he really loved was scientific lectures—listening to Lord Rayleigh and such men. He had very few intimate friends. He often said, and truly, that absence from politics would be no deprivation to him. But, when he played, he played the game to the last point. His one great admiration was for his uncle, whom he admired immensely as one better in his own lines than himself. He used to

deerstalk, and was a capital shot, but had given it up now. Society amused him, but he was in it and not of it, and he was very unsusceptible. Balfour had told Mrs. Asquith that he was very dissatisfied with his book<sup>1</sup>—afraid he had not been able to put his thoughts clearly. Mrs. Asquith seems to have succeeded in giving a faithful and vivid delineation of a character to whose charm Cook more than once bears personal witness.

In 1908 Asquith became Prime Minister, and Cook comments thus: "My memory went back to that time with Emmie (Mrs. Cook) at Admiral Maxse's when 'Margot' was there, and she discussed whether she should marry Rosebery, Balfour or Asquith, and which would be Prime Minister first".

Of Morley, Ruskin and Gladstone much has already been said in this book. The Morley references are persistent. Here, for example, is one which scarcely accords with the austere and ascetic reputation of the subject. "Dinner at St. James' Club—very swagger. J. M. highly praised the Bollinger 1904 as a divine drink". In fact the British public, usually very shrewd in its assessments, has not been so successful with Mr. Morley. The implications of the popular title of "Honest John" are rather a misfit. Morley is honest beyond question, but that does not specially distinguish him from his fellows. A rough and rugged simplicity is not his peculiar attribute. In fact, the interlocutors in the Diary ascribe to him with quite a curious agreement a certain feminine vanity as an unmistakable ingredient in one of the most charming personalities of our age. To these popular misconceptions was due the shock of surprise when "Honest John" accepted a peerage. In fact, Lord Morley was by no means insensible of the decora-

<sup>1</sup> *The Foundations of Belief* was published in 1895.

tive effect of a title or of the pomp and circumstance of high office. It is interesting to hear that Lord Morley was paid £1500 for his *Life of Cobden*, and £10,000 for his *Gladstone*. The sales of the *Gladstone*, Cook tells us (1911), amounted to over 100,000, which includes 10,000 copies sold in the United States.

The biographies of men of action are usually more interesting than those of literary or artistic people, whose best memorial, as a rule, is their own works. Character is the staple of biography, and character is formed less in the study or the studio than in the arenas of strife.

Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,  
Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt.<sup>1</sup>

Yet humanity is always curious about the private life and conversation of those who have achieved distinction in any department of life, and Cook's acquaintanceship in literary and artistic circles was almost as extensive as his political friendship. In the Diary we pass from Belgravia to Bohemia in the most staccato manner. Consecutive entries in July 1901 take us to an esoteric political meeting at Mr. Asquith's and to a luncheon at Mr. Swinburne's. Cook's record of the poetic symposium is as follows :

Went down to Putney to lunch with Theodore Watts and Swinburne. Watts' room on ground floor, where we had luncheon (all rather frowsy—anchovy sauce in streaks). Swinburne came in late—a short man and fat, now nearly bald. Both of them in carpet slippers. Swinburne very deaf—only addressable when T. Watts pulled chair round and shouted, "Our friend here is speaking of Mat. Arnold". This set him off talking in a curious falsetto, very emphatic voice (his hand shaking violently at meals and in a way like a child). "M. A.'s best things, *Strayed Reveller*,

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<sup>1</sup> "A talent is shaped in solitude, a character in the stream of the world".

*Resignation* and the two elegies—nothing else occurs to me. *Sohrab* good, but only a prize poem. *Ulysses* is more. M. A. did nothing which somebody else has not done better. Tennyson imitative, too, could not have written as he did without Homer and Virgil—yet there is something else. M. A.'s ear awful—he had none. *Ulysses* very un-Homeric. Only English can understand the *Odyssey*, for it is all home. And Tennyson far less grand conception than Dante's". And he rolled out the Dante—"that's the perfection of poetry". He talked also of Sam Butler, Bacon and Shakespeare.

After lunch we went up to Swinburne's room on the first floor—stacked everywhere with books. He browsed around, showing me his treasures for about an hour—large paper Kelmscotts given him by W. Morris (including *Atalanta*—"but he should have made it *Erechtheus*, which is a real Greek poem"); first Italian editions of Shelley—"the only good ones, beautiful type and Shelley corrected the proofs carefully: the English, I suppose he thought would be all right, and they are full of blunders";<sup>1</sup> an illustrated edition of *Notre Dame*, with a Meissonier of Louis XI.—"Wonderful! Now if Irving would get up like that, I would go to see him. Curious that Ruskin should have admired Meissonier. The only time he came to rooms of mine he was delighted at seeing those engravings of Turner, for Rossetti and Ned Jones<sup>2</sup> did not care much about Turner, but I was brought up on him (he used to visit my family) and simply revel in everything of his". Watts said Swinburne was a very great admirer of John Ruskin, but he himself not. Watts said Swinburne a limpet—would never go anywhere except for sea-bathing.

We get a good many glimpses of George Meredith in these daily notes. In October 1892 Cook and his wife are at the "Maxses" with Meredith, Miss Margot Asquith and others. "Meredith", we read, "was rather tottery from incipient spinal paralysis, not sure of his

<sup>1</sup> Cook adds a note—Also "*Sidonia the sorceress*", of which Swinburne said, "A real work of genius, but very horrible, the most horrible in literature. Tennyson said, 'I would not have missed it for anything, but I would not read it again for anything'".

<sup>2</sup> Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart.

legs. A very brilliant talker, but a little too affected and set". He suggested for the new paper about to be started for Cook the names of "Torch" or "The P.M.". Admiral Maxse, as is well known, was the model for Meredith's "Beauchamp". "It was pleasant", writes Cook, "to see Meredith and 'Beauchamp' walking about, Meredith chaffing him about the ladies".

It is interesting to notice how far an acquired reputation will carry a man. Cook relates a story told by "R. Smith", who had devilled for Sir Charles Russell (afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen). Russell had a consultation on an insurance case, and had not looked at any of the papers. On the way from court to chambers he asked R. S., "What is against us?" S. said, "Our doctor reported the life a good one". Russell began the consultation: "Well, gentlemen, isn't this rather awkward about our doctor?" and for the rest merely asked questions. The clients were much impressed: "That's it, Sir Charles, you've put your hand on our weak spot". After the cross-examination of Pigott, in the great Parnell case, R. S. went to coach Russell in another case. "It's no good, my boy", he said; "I can't take it in. That sort of thing takes it out of one".

Among the young men of personal charm and brilliant promise who perished in the war was Mr. Asquith's son, Raymond. Cook quotes a verse from Raymond's skit, "A Threnody by T. H. Warren<sup>1</sup> on the Death of a Viscount":

Dear Viscount, in whose ancient blood  
The azure of the bird of March,  
The purple of the ripening larch  
Are mixed in one magenta flood.

Cook heard that Raymond Asquith's dying words

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir T. H. Warren, Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

were (with a smile), " To think that I should be dying for my country as a lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards ".

This anthology from Cook's daily jottings might be indefinitely prolonged. These selections will indicate the range of his interests and the catholicity of his friendships.

## CHAPTER XVII

### DEATH AND CHARACTER

Se il mondo sapesse il cor ch' egli ebbe,  
Assai lo lodo e più lo loderebbe.

("If the world might know the heart he had within him, much as it praiseth, it would praise him more.")—DANTE, *Paradiso*, vi. 141-142.

COOK's death, so far as the expectation of his friends was concerned, happened suddenly. Sir Frank Swettenham had received a letter from him only a few days before, in which no reference to any illness occurred. Other friends, however, had noticed a change, and the present writer, meeting him some time before the end, had been struck by the alteration in his personal appearance. He died at Rose Cottage, Southstoke, Oxon, on September 30, 1919, of pneumonia, of which he had already suffered from two attacks. But a worse symptom had been the persistent malady in his hand, which was declared by his own physician to be writer's cramp, but by a specialist whom he consulted to be incipient paralysis, no doubt the more correct diagnosis. His death at the age of sixty-two, in the prime of his powers, was an unexpected blow to his friends and relatives, but one shrinks from naming it premature in the thought of the immense work, much of it permanent in character and destiny, which he had accomplished.

Private and public recognitions of his virtues and services were many. "I feel his loss keenly", wrote

Sir Frank Swettenham, "for a wiser, kinder, truer gentleman it would be hard to find, and I never met another man with whom I would have shared the directorship of the Press Bureau. With him it was to halve the troubles and double the pleasures of that strange post". And again: "It did not need five years of the closest association to show me that he was one of the best, the kindest and the wisest of men. I don't think we were any of us lazily inclined, but he always tried to do more than his share of the work, and he often succeeded".

The President of the Board of Education wrote to Mr. A. K. Cook :

THE ATHENÆUM, PALL MALL, S.W.1,  
*October 2, 1919.*

MY DEAR COOK—I was greatly distressed, on opening my paper this morning, to read of your brother's death, and the shock was the greater since I was not aware that he had been ill. For sheer unostentatious competence upon a very high level he had few equals in this country, and surely there was never a life more worthily or completely filled. On (?) the Warden and Fellows he was a tower of strength, disdaining no detail, however small, and addressing himself with absolute self-surrender to every form of minute, useful and tedious labour. We shall all miss him very greatly. So, too, will the country, for there are few men—indeed, I cannot recall any man—in the world of journalism, who unite in so rare and satisfactory a manner his qualities of sobriety, exactness and taste.—Yours sincerely,

HERBERT FISHER.

From another high official in the Board of Education (Sir L. A. Selby-Bigge, K.C.B., Permanent Secretary) came a letter of touching reminiscence :

WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.,  
*October 9, 1919.*

The death of your brother, of which I only heard when I got back from Ireland this week, is a great grief to me. I owe him



a great deal from the time when he was a big boy and I was a little boy in College, and he made me read Ruskin—sometimes when I wanted to play fives. He taught me more than any one I have known. I have had a good many dealings with him lately, and hoped that this country would get a good deal more useful work out of him before he was laid on the shelf, but I expect the Press Bureau finished him.

I had a great affection and respect for him, and he was about my oldest friend. I feel very sad. If I have done anything solid and useful in my life it is mainly due to him. You may like to receive my tribute of gratitude and affection.

Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, K.C., wrote to Mrs. Vincent, Sir Edward's sister :

I have just got your wire, and am greatly grieved, but the loss of old friends is the penalty of increasing years. There were few like your brother. I shall always like to remember that in all my years of work with him on the Ruskin Edition there was never a jar between us. His admirable judgment always seemed—and was—right.

Later on his representatives and I will have to consider what to do about the joint gift of our books promised to Oxford. He and I were to have arranged them together, but it will be saddened work now.

The last passage of this letter refers to a most valuable gift of books relating to Ruskin, which were presented by Sir Edward and Mr. Wedderburn to Oxford University.

Mrs. Carruthers (Miss Violet Markham) in the course of a letter from Cologne to Mr. A. M. Cook, written some months later, says :

You say that people who did not know him looked upon your brother as "an austere sphinx". Of course that is an utter travesty. He was not a man who wore his mind any more than his heart on his sleeve for casual fools to peck at. But the nobility of his character was rooted in its deep humanity and wide sympathies, and surely only the very obtuse could have failed to notice the twinkle in his eye when his countenance other-

wise seemed grave. It will be a lifelong regret to me that we had seen so little of each other of late.

And in a postscript :

I hope you won't continue to regret the years given to Ruskin. Ruskin has had his period of eclipse, but his work will, I believe, always remain a clarion call to the generous youth of succeeding generations. To have made that message clearer and more intelligible is, I believe, a greater public service to have rendered than to have been immersed in the *sewage* (forgive my language) of current politics.

In this letter Mrs. Carruthers alludes to a criticism of Cook's manner and temperament rather than his character, which is too general for a biographer *de bonne foi* to disregard. Many who came only into superficial contact with Cook complained of a want of warmth and sympathy. He was likened to a glacier or an iceberg exhaling a chilliness into the surrounding air. I confess to some very slight experience of this sort in the early days of my association with Cook. But my prevailing impression of Cook is one of genial summer sunshine rather than of winter glaciation, and I should myself say that a sunnier and happier nature was never lodged in human flesh. It is true he was not a man of indiscriminate *bonhomie* or an expert in the mere forms and gestures of human fellowship. Mrs. Cook once said to me : "Teddy makes few friends". All this is true, but it is also true that no man was ever more loyal and devoted to the friends whose adoption he had tried. This memoir is much at fault if it has not afforded ample evidence of Cook's real kindness and generosity of heart. The tributes of his friends are conclusive in this matter. Lord Rosebery's reference to Cook as "a delightful friend" has already been quoted. This was written in 1920, but the charm of Cook's friendship receives testimony at much earlier dates. Lord Curzon,

writing in 1898, speaks of " my good fortune in retaining a friendship which in our common Oxford days it was always a pride to me to have won ".

But it is in the home-life and the " little unremembered acts " that a man's true nature is expressed. Some vivid glimpses of Cook in his more private life are afforded by a few reminiscences written down by Mrs. H. B. Irving (Miss Dorothea Baird), his sister-in-law :

I can remember very clearly the days from '85 onwards at West Hampstead, brightened by the advent of my sister and brother-in-law, whose Sunday visit was the great affair of our week. He had an enormous capacity for being young and understanding the point of view of childhood—a capacity which those who did not know him in the family circle had no idea of. My sister idealised all children, and he respected her ideal. Looking back, I think we realised that he enjoyed playing with us ; he was really interested. He was always very tender with tiny children, but after my sister's death he seemed to lose a great deal of the power of speaking their language, though to the end of his life his love for them was manifest.

One of his most delightful characteristics was his genius for holiday-making. He had every quality necessary to the perfect traveller. Two holidays spent with them in Northern Italy are not to be forgotten. He never fussed, but accepted all environments and got the best out of each, and his sense of humour on the one hand, and his great knowledge of art and literature on the other, lighted up every turn in our wanderings. He had a wonderful faculty for making tea on all occasions, beautifully and without any mess, while my sister sketched, and, despite his learning, he never appeared academic to the ignorance of adolescence.

His memory was extraordinary, and he loved quoting any beautiful lines that the scenery called up in his mind. Both my sister and he liked to travel off the beaten paths, tramping through snow and over glaciers down all the pleasant valleys of the Italian Alps from Monte Rosa to Mont Blanc. Though no one could call him an athlete he was a good walker. He had a

great affection for guide-books, especially one written by a certain early Victorian Mr. King, whose efforts to overcome frightful difficulties in climbing mountains with a wife in a crinoline always amused us. He was very fond of the "Sacramentes" of Varallo and Orta and the Passion plays of the Lakes. I remember at Varallo finding Mr. Sam Butler groping in a little grated cavern, one of a series illustrating the Story of the Cross, and nearly taking him for one of the painted clay figures themselves.

My brother-in-law had a keen admiration for and understanding of the young girl. There was nothing that he would not do to make things delightful and pleasant for her. I think he even believed in Ruskin's theory that she was worth waiting seven years for. Yet with his kindness one always felt that he was rather a stickler about overstepping conventional bounds. His solicitude and affection, however, for me, when I finally decided to make the stage my profession, were remarkable, and both he and my sister without a word took it for granted that I should make my headquarters with them, and while on tour they came to criticise and help me whenever we were near enough to London for them to get away. When I was with them between tours it always seemed to me wonderful how, after a heavy week's work, Teddie would come home on a Saturday afternoon, apparently thinking of nothing but the little treat he had provided for all three of us, when a pint bottle of champagne crowned our dinner, and we went off gaily to the upper boxes or the dress circle to see the latest successful drama.

He loved also a holiday on the Thames, and generally secured a brief three days at Whitsuntide. I remember such a holiday on the Upper River, when, after successfully manœuvring "the stripling Thames at Bablock Hythe", he and I by changing places in mid-stream unfortunately fell into the river. This contretemps did not upset him in the least. We merely dripped our way to a cottage, and in half an hour he was continuing his journey to Lechlade in the Sunday best of the old cottage labourer.

Strangers, though cognisant of his brilliant literary gifts and his extraordinary width of knowledge, did not realise that other and more human side. Whenever those he loved came in touch

with him, they realised that he drew from his environment every ounce of material as well as spiritual and mental gain. He appreciated the cider cup at Godstow as well as the beauty of the white and purple fritillaries and the blue hyacinths of Eynsham. A dinner in Paris was enjoyed and considered with as much vital interest as the galleries we had done during the day, and a bathe in the Lido at Venice was never incompatible with appreciating the full beauties of an Italian sunset.

I think he never got quite reconciled to the freedom which was necessary to a girl taking up a profession such as mine, and from being brother and playmate (I had no brothers and my father was dead) he tended to become graver, and in all difficulties, until when on my wedding day he gave me away, he was behind me ready to act if necessary on my behalf and make easy with his wise counsel the difficult paths which naturally beset the young person of twenty thrown upon the world on her own resources.

I must leave psychologists to explain how a man of such a lovable and kindly disposition can have presented, as many seem to think, such an icy exterior to the world. It is likely enough that this manner was the result of shyness, the protective armour-plate assumed by a too vulnerable sensibility. The curious thing was that any such impressions were always being corrected by the geniality of mouth and eyes, which indeed are truer mirrors of the soul than gesture and handshake. But though I believe a more kindly and generous heart never beat than Sir Edward Cook's, it is no doubt true that justice, rather than philanthropic sentiment, was the basis of his character, and justice is a much rarer and more difficult virtue than some persons think. To stand up to one's enemies is easy enough, but to stand up to one's friends and even to oneself in the name of justice is a much higher spiritual exercise, of which Cook was fully capable.

It was this quality of calm and equable justice which

gave Sir Edward Cook that upholding power acknowledged by all who came within his orbit. We have seen him in his early youth the wise counsellor of his coevals. This influence, largely the outcome of his singularly wise judgment, persisted throughout his life. Mrs. Carruthers writes (1908) in one of those letters which are so remarkable for a keen criticism of life :

I am glad to say, in spite of all the small and petty and sordid things one runs up against so constantly, the finer and better elements in human nature seem to me far to outweigh the others. So far from being crushed by the sense of human depravity, I am always being moved by the nobility and self-sacrifice which dignify so many humble lives, and shine like great lights in others more fortunately placed. It is perhaps rather surprising to come into middle life with such a faith, but I can only say it deepens in me year by year, and without it existence would be meaningless and all work a farce. I am so very glad to think you feel the same, though *you* being *you* could hardly feel differently. That steadfast power you have which means so much to all your friends and makes your written word such a message to many people could only come from a positive attitude towards life.

And in another letter :

You little realise how much you count to all whose lives are touched by yours, and to whom life itself is a better thing because they have known the influence of your high faith and purpose.

Such tributes could scarcely have been elicited from the friends of a sphinx or a Rhadamanthus. The subconscious, as distinct from the articulate, influence exercised by Cook was indeed remarkable. Such a man becomes an embodiment of what is best and highest in the world, and his death seems to remove a part of the indispensable stay and support of the moral order.

It has often been asked why Cook never entered Parliamentary life. After his exclusion from daily

journalism he had once more a choice of Parliamentary candidatures offered to him. But Cook was wise for himself as well as for others, and it was no doubt his own perfect self-knowledge which diverted him from these paths. He was not specially qualified either in physique or in spirit for the sordid and shifting melley of party and Parliamentary life. No doubt there were offices under the Crown which he would have appropriately and successfully filled. A not unhappy thought prompted a rumour at one time that he was likely to become the British Ambassador at Washington. He had many qualifications for success in that high station. He was once described as the best post-prandial speaker in England; his gift in that line, together with his sound political judgment, his ardent patriotism, his intellectual culture, and that "quiet dignity and gentle bearing"<sup>1</sup> which was his, might have made him an ideal representative in the American capital.

But Cook realised himself in his own way. He has enriched our literature with many works of permanent worth, left a beneficent impress upon the politics of his country, and bequeathed to his own profession of journalism a high example of moral purpose and literary art which, we may hope, it will long continue to honour and to emulate.

<sup>1</sup> Happily chosen words in a review of the second volume of *Literary Recreations*, written in the *Book Monthly* by Mr. W. B. Kempling of the *Daily Chronicle*.





## A LIST OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES BY E. T. C.

1880. (1) "The Connection between Poetry and Painting", *Temple Bar Magazine*, July, pp. 351-361.
- (2) "Acting, Natural and Acquired", *Temple Bar Magazine*, July, pp. 400-403.
1882. (3) The Irish Land Act, 1881 [44, 45, Vic. c. 49]: its origin, its principles and its working. A rejoinder to the Hon. G. C. Brodrick [*i.e.* to his lecture on the Irish Land Act of 1881, published in *Frazer's Magazine*, Jan. 1882], being, with additions, a paper read before the Palmerston Club [Oxford]. Pp. 72. Blackwell, Oxford.
1888. (4) A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery: including by special permission notes collected from the works of Mr. Ruskin. With Preface by J. R. Pp. vii-ix, xviii + 703, Macmillan.
- First edition, both in two volumes and in one. Seven editions revised and rearranged follow—the eighth in 1912.
- (5) "Home Affairs, Reviews of", *Westminster Review*. Nine monthly articles between Sept. 1887 and May 1888.
1890. (6) Studies in Ruskin: some aspects of the work and teaching of John Ruskin, with reproductions of drawings by J. R. in the Ruskin Drawing School, Oxford. Pp. xiv + 334. G. Allen, Orpington.
- A large paper quarto edition, and a smaller without the autotypes.
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1897. (8) London and Environs, by Emily C. Cook [Mrs. E. T. Cook]. With chapters on the British Museum, the National Gallery and South Kensington, by E. T. C. Darlington's Handbooks.
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- (10) *The Passing of Gladstone: his life, death and burial*. Reprinted from the *Daily News*. Pp. 208. Simpkin, Marshall & Co.
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- (14) "The Foreign Policy of Lord Rosebery", *Contemporary Review*: I. July, pp. 1-12; II. Aug., pp. 153-176.
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- (16) "Lord Rosebery and the Liberal Party", *New Liberal Review*, Aug., pp. 11-17.
- (17) "Paralysis of Parliament", *Quarterly Review*, Oct., pp. 601-636.
- (18) "Some Editorial Experiences", *Universal Magazine*, Dec., pp. 61-73.
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- (20) "Lord Rosebery and the Copperheads", *Contemporary Review*, Jan., pp. 1-12.
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- (26) "Colonial Preference—the Colonial View", *New Liberal Review*, July, pp. 756-764.
- (27) "Mr. Gladstone as Foreign Minister", *Monthly Review*, Nov., pp. 70-86.

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 (31) "Hidden Treasures at the National Gallery". A selection of studies and drawings by J. M. W. Turner, R.A., now published for the first time, with some account of them and a sketch of Turner's life and reproductions of a number of his finished works. Pp. 96 folio. *Pall Mall Press*.  
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